

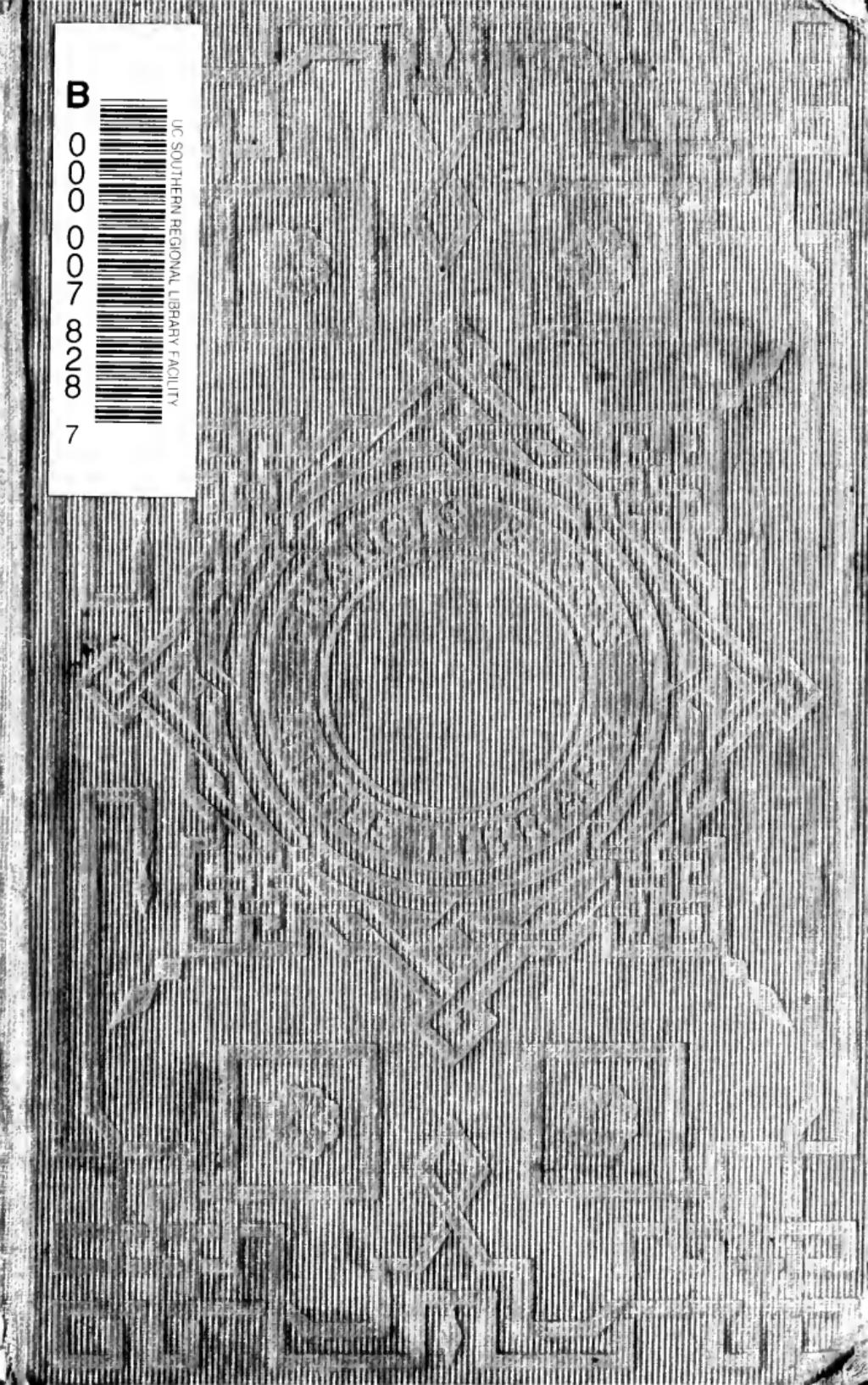
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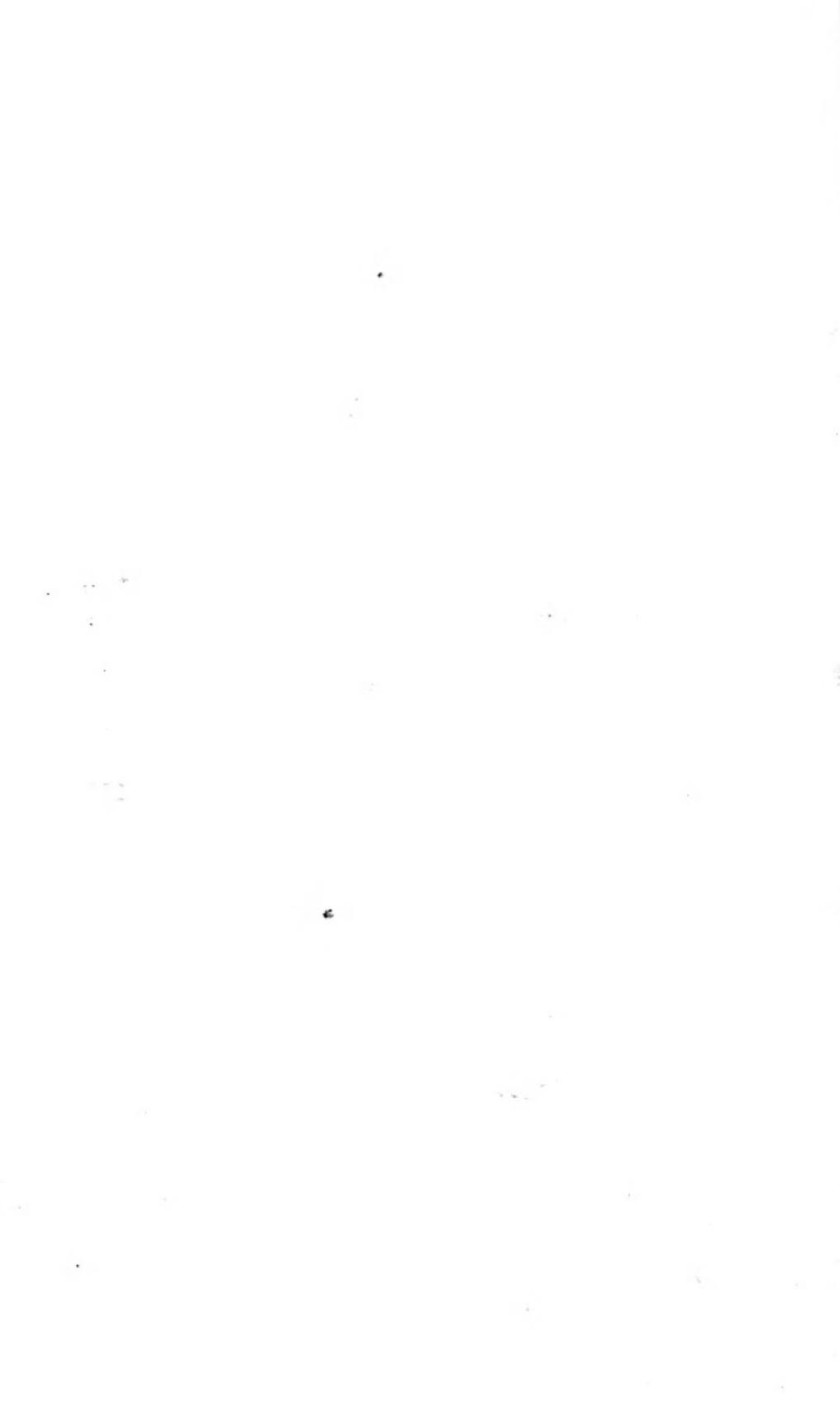
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# THE PRIVATE PURSE.

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## CHAPTER I.

“TELL my niece, Miss Geraldine—I mean, tell Mrs. Leeson—that as soon as she has put off her bridal and put on her travelling dress, I wish to see her,” said Mrs. Gascoigne to her maid, who had not answered her bell until she had rung it twice.

“Yes, ma’am,” replied the flushed maiden, who was bowed out with white satin ribbon, as if she too were just made a bride.

“And listen—When all this mummery is over, take off these white fal-lals, and lay them by; they will do for the next fool of the family who chooses to enter the ‘holy bonds’—ah! ah!”

The servant hardly murmured “Yes, ma’am” to this, nor had she quite closed the door on the crackling laugh of her mistress, when she muttered, “Well, that beats all! She to come on a visit to her own sister on her niece’s wedding-day, and grudge me wearing of the ribbons that cost her nothing! But it’s just like her! Stingy!—augh! It’s no use talking—I cant a-bear

stinginess. I wonder why she could not stay below at the breakfast like other Christians ; but it's none of my business. Put by the ribbons, indeed, that never cost her a brass farthing !” A group of ladies passing from one room to another interrupted this soliloquy, and turned the rippling current of the waiting-maid’s small mind from meditation to observation. In an instant she became spell-bound by the white roses that garlanded the bridesmaids’ bonnets.

Mrs. Gaseoigne, a lady of some five-and-fifty years, who had been a wife for a year and a widow for ten, was occupied after her own fashion. She was seated at a table in her dressing-room, and upon it was her open desk. Her long narrow features were pinched into a mean expression ; her hair grew thinly above her brow ; and yet it was short and frizzed, as if it had not the heart to grow long. Her lips were thin and compressed, betokening, however, secrecy rather than firmness. I have noted ugly mouths, still of a bland and generous formation ; but I never saw a mouth like Mrs. Gascoigne’s that was not indicative of meanness and subterfuge. Her eyes were fine—that is to say, well set, and of a good colour ; but their expression was unpleasing—it was sharp and suspicious. Her dress was neither good nor becoming, and she had flung aside the silver favour indicative of the motive that had drawn her from her own home. A faded purse of blue and white was between her fingers, and into it she had dropped

some guineas—not sovereigns, but old-fashioned golden guineas—which she had, as it were, purloined from her own desk. She shook them once or twice, and an unconscious smile disturbed the gravity of her face—It was evident that she loved the golden chimes. Then she picked one out, and put it into its secret hiding-place in her desk. “Forty-nine,” she said to herself—“forty-nine will go as far with a foolish girl as fifty; but it is an odd number—she may wonder why it was not fifty.” Another was taken from the purse and returned to the drawer. A moment’s pause—she looked out a third, a fourth; weighed it for a moment on her well-practised finger—it was a thought light, so she exchanged it for one that pleased her better, and it was dropped into the hoard. Another—she chinked the purse again. “Forty-five good guineas—forty and five,” she repeated—“hum! quite enough to commence a private purse for the wife of a young banker;” and she shut it to with a determined snap.

“May I come in, dear aunt?” said a sweet voice at the door—“may I come in?”

Until the desk was shut and locked she made no answer; and then, affecting not to have recognised tones the sweetness of which told upon every ear, as the joy bells sound upon the summer air, she inquired, “Who is there?”

“Me, aunt—Geraldine,” answered the same music.

“Oh yes, dear, come in,” said Mrs. Gas-

coigne. For a moment she looked with pride upon the young and lovely being who had that day committed her entire destiny into the hands of one who had promised, with his whole heart and soul, to "love her, comfort her, honour and keep her in sickness and in health ; and, forsaking all others, keep him only unto her so long as they both should live."

"Why, dear," exclaimed Mrs. Gascoigne, as the mind returned to its old habits, "what a deal of money that dress must have cost ! it is a real pity to hack it travelling—a real pity. Dear Geraldine, have you no turned silk you could wear on the journey ?—eh !"

"You know, aunt, I brought Henry no fortune, so mamma thought the least thing I might have was a handsome wardrobe ;" and she looked as much annoyed as she could have been with anything on such a day.

"Ah, dear—well, that's true ; I suppose your poor mother scraped together all she could to make up the trousseau, and has no little purse to give you, eh ?"

"My dear mother," replied the bride—and the ready tears rose to her eyes—"has indeed done every thing to make me happy—I was going to say independent—but every woman is dependent upon her husband ; and Henry is so gentle and affectionate, I have no fear that he will make me feel he was rich and I was poor. Mamma gave me ten guineas, and," added the fair girl (she had not numbered nineteen sum-

mers,) with a proud air, “ it will be a long time before I spend all that.”

“ That’s my own Geraldine—keep it, dear—don’t spend it—keep it. Gold grows by the keeping; it does not rust or mildew—keep it; it is power—all that man or woman wants. I know that—by wanting it, Geraldine. Ay, you may smile, and I daresay your mother and all of them think it not true: poor Mr. Gascoigne left me enough, but no more. You, Geraldine, were my god-child—called after me—and I must say that you have been as good and as affectionate as if I had made you a present every birthday, which, perhaps, I might have done, had I not been afraid you would have married your cousin Arthur Harewell.”

“ My dearest aunt!” ejaculated Geraldine, in a tone of surprise.

“ Oh, yes! I know he was very fond of you; but I hate every one of the Harewells; they are as poor as church mice, and yet as proud of their intellect as if they had been every one city members. Now, my dear, I am going to tell you a secret, which I must not have you tell Henry; your own secrets you may tell him, if you are foolishly fond of talking, but as this is *my* secret, you have no right to tell it.”

“ No,” said Geraldine, somewhat hastily, “ I will not tell him your secret, aunt. I have no right to do that, I think.”

“ Certainly not, my dear; all men have odd notions, and it is a foolish thing to tell them every

nonsense ; it makes them think little of us women, to keep up a tittle-tattle about every trifle."

Geraldine gave no reply to this. She had made up her mind to tell Henry every thing ; this was her own right-minded impulse ; for her mother, a quiet, amiable, fashionably-thinking woman, fancied she performed her duty when she sent Geraldine to a boarding-school, heard her play and sing, and saw her dance during the vacations—restricted her own expenditure in all things that she might have the best masters, and be as well dressed as girls who had ten times her fortune—a sure way to enfeeble the mind—took it for granted, that, as she knew her catechism, had been confirmed, and went every Sunday to church, her religious education was such as to befit the high calling of a Christian—and had never spoken to her of the duties a woman is called upon to fulfil as wife and mother, until about a week previous to the wedding-day, when she told her to be affectionate and forbearing, and "not to forget her own dignity." Something she added about the duties of a mother, and the advantage of cold bathing for infants ; but quickly concluded by saying that there would be "time enough to think of that." No wonder that Geraldine was unable to reply to her aunt's common-places, and at once unravel their fallacy and penetrate their danger. There are, to my knowledge, at this moment, when volumes on female education pour from the press—when national education is rendering the lower supe-

rior to the higher class in solid and useful knowledge—there are scores of well-intentioned ladies, gentlewomen by birth and in manner, who love their daughters, who would (if they knew how) forward their temporal and eternal welfare in every possible way—and yet do no more than Geraldine Leeson's mother did. When shall we have a school for mothers?

Mrs. Gascoigne resumed the broken thread of her discourse more quickly than I have finished my digression.

“ Well, my dear Geraldine, I have here a little present for you—just enough to prevent your running to your husband's pocket every moment; but *you must not tell him a word about it*—it is *my* secret. If he or your mother were to know I had scraped together fifty—no, five-and-forty—guineas for you, they would expect me to go on giving; and the more you give, the more you may. So, take it with my blessing, child, and take care of it; *spend it secretly* for any little thing you may want, and say nothing about it.”

Geraldine was really surprised and pleased; she had never in all her life had so much money of her own, and least of all had she expected it from her “stingy aunt.” She reiterated her thanks most sincerely; and little thought she had taken the first step towards deceiving her husband and working her own misery.

“ Remember,” repeated Mrs. Gascoigne—“ remember, it is my secret, and you have

*promised*; you cannot conceive how I should suffer if you broke your word.” Again Geraldine kissed her, and bade her affectionately farewell—not before she had been twice summoned by her bridesmaids.

“I *might* as well,” said this dangerous monitor, as she took her seat by the window to observe the departing carriages—“I *might* as well have taken back that odd five; and then the ten her mother gave would have just made up the fifty. I hope she’ll take care of it, poor dear child! There she goes, and her cousin, Arthur Harewell, handing her in! Well, I shall conceive it my duty to give Henry Leeson a hint to look after his pretty wife when **Master Harewell** is in the way. It is a very queer world we live in!”

The people who make the world “queer,” as they call it, are the first to complain of this queerness; and so it was with Mrs. Gascoigne. Her own marriage had been entirely dictated by interested motives. She married a rich old miser for the sake of his wealth when she was past forty; and upon her “queer” ways his “queer” ways became engrafted. Geraldine’s match pleased her, *because* Mr. Leeson was rich; and she fancied her god-child had inherited her disposition, *because* she had discarded a poor cousin, whom she believed, erroneously, she loved, and married a wealthy man, whom she, as erroneously, believed she did not love. If Geraldine *had* chanced to like and wed her poor

cousin, Mrs. Gascoigne would never have given her five-and-forty pence.

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## CHAPTER II.

GERALDINE LEESON had escaped many of the contaminations of a public school, from a sincere desire to learn thoroughly whatever she undertook; consequently she had little spare time. She knew the sacrifices her mother made that she might become accomplished; and besides, she loved her home dearly and devotedly. She had not left it as early as many children do, so that the home affections, if not full-grown, had taken root before her departure into a community as varied and as dangerous as that of all large schools must be, until their entire system is thoroughly regenerated. Still, as this was a "finishing school," she could not but hear various speculations, on the part of many of the elder girls, as to "when they should come out." How anxious the mamma of one was to get papa into good humour, to spend a winter in Paris—whether he could afford it or not—because her cousin had made an excellent match there; to be sure, the gentleman thought at first, from the style they lived in, that they were very rich, but he knew the difference now; and the other girls

laughed at this, and exclaimed, "What fun!" Another mourned bitterly "papa's stinginess," and how *her* poor mamma was obliged to alter the house bills to make them appear more than they were, or else they never could have anything fit to wear; while a third rejoiced that such never could be the case at home, as *her* mamma's pin money was secured, and she did as she pleased without consulting any one! All this sort of poisoning is carried on, like all poisonings, secretly: I do believe that few women, undertaking the charge of youth, would suffer such observations to go unreproved; but no governess can have ear and eye for fifty, or even five-and-twenty, "grown-up" young ladies, who are permitted to sleep, four or two, in the same room, and to walk attended by foreign teachers, who frequently do not understand the language spoken by their pupils.

Geraldine had escaped systematic corruption; she loved music and dancing for their own sakes, and never cared a great deal for creating a sensation. She, of course, desired to be loved; but she never degraded affection by calculation. She would have paused, certainly, before she wedded poverty; but she would not have married simply because her lover was rich. So far she was tolerably right; but, unfortunately, many mothers, and hers among the number, have confused notions as to the boundaries of the delicate and indelicate. If love is mentioned, instead of impressing the young mind with a just idea of

its sacred nature, its holy attributes, its natural impulses, it is dimissed with an “ Oh fie !” or a reproving look, which at once assures the daughter that her mother cannot be her confidant, and thus a mother loses a stronghold in her child’s mind ; whereas, making it the subject of conversation, speaking of it as an event on which much of the happiness or misery of after-life depends, would strengthen the reasoning powers against its undue influence, and, while subduing its violence, lead to its being considered in its more holy and sacred bearings.

Geraldine’s mother would have almost blushed herself at mentioning a husband to her, in the abstract ; and yet she could not fail to perceive to what the hint of, “ Geraldine, wear your blue and white, and let Esther dress your hair ; I want you to look particularly well to-night ” tended—for this was done when only one eldest son was expected to “ come in and try his new flute.” How much of the dignity of truth, with which every British mother ought to be crowned, is sacrificed to those petty arts ; how much misery ensured, by domestic duties feebly sustained !

“ I hope,” said her mother—“ I hope and pray you may make a good wife ;” and she meant what she said, but she had never adopted the means to make her one.

Geraldine read over the marriage ceremony, thought for a moment how harsh that word “ obey ” sounded, then wondered she had thought so—“ it would be so easy to obey one she loved

as she loved Henry—obedience would be pleasure ;” and so she closed the book. Her nature was very timid. She had little strength of either body or mind, but she had much affection, a gentle yielding temper, and wished to do right in all things. Her husband had settled a handsome independence upon her in case of his death; but the idea of wanting anything while he lived she had put far from her. Although induced by her selfish aunt to promise not to mention her fatal gift, it had never entered into her head that she was doing wrong in keeping a secret from her husband.

Six months had elapsed since Geraldine became the wife of Henry Leeson. She was established in a pretty house at the “West End;” had a chariot of the newest build, a pair of unexceptionable bays, a very tall footman, and a very little page; went sometimes to the opera, presided at a small dinner party, and assisted at a soiree, with infinite propriety; and so liberally had her husband ministered even to her fancies, that she had only spent five guineas of her store. She had told him of her mother’s gift, but remained silent as to her aunt’s. Her cousin had come to town to “keep his terms,” and her aunt had succeeded her mother as an inmate for a month. “The season,” as it is called, had commenced; and if it had not been that her aunt’s presence damped her spirits, she would have been as happy as any wife could be. Her husband never was late at his club, and, like most

junior partners in a bank, did not remain at his counting-house longer than was absolutely necessary.

One evening, soon after the aunt and her niece had taken their places in front of a private box at Covent Garden—for they did not move in the very high sphere which eschew English theatres altogether—Henry, leaning over his wife's chair exclaimed, “Why, Geraldine, what a handsome chain! I have not seen it before. Where did you get it?”

“I bought it, love.”

“When?”

“Oh! let me see—this week.”

“This week! and never consulted me! I hope,” he added, looking somewhat serious, “that it is paid for.”

“Of course it is, Henry. Why do you ask?”

“Because that chain must have cost twenty-five guineas at least, and, you know, last week you shook your empty purse at me, and I put only ten guineas into it. Where did you get the money?”—

Her aunt contrived to press her foot, as a warning. “I told you mamma gave me ten guineas when I left home.”

“But you told me how you spent five of that at Cheltenham. We young bankers understand subtraction.”

“Well, then,” she replied, colouring with confusion, “if you must know, mamma made me up the money, as I fancied the chain.”

Mr. Leeson bit his lip. "Indeed!" he replied; "she is richer than I fancied."

"It does not need a mother to be very rich to give a child ten guineas even for such a toy as this," she said, flinging the links over her pretty shoulder.

"Certainly not, my dear; but riches are comparative. One person is rich with a pound, another poor with a thousand." He looked serious, even stern for a moment, as if something very unpleasant was presented to his mind; and then his fine animated face brightened up, and he added, "I hope my little Geraldine has not made a private purse!"

She could not reply; she felt agitated, degraded; she had told a falsehood, and one likely to be detected. The performance passed unheeded; she tried to smile, but, instead of smiling, burst into tears. Mr. Leeson had not been long enough married to slight a wife's tears; he withdrew her from the front, and thought he had spoken harshly, when he had only spoken seriously; he caressed and apologised, and every affectionate word he spoke added to her self-reproach. Soon after, her cousin entered the box; his manner was only that of most animated young men, light and careless, with an occasional *empressement*, rendered more striking when contrasted with his ordinary trifling. Still, that manner was the one, of all others, her husband disliked most. Nor had Mrs. Gascoigne's injudicious hint been wanting, to increase the an-

tipathy he had felt towards this well-intentioned but frivolous young man, from the first. Arthur Harewell used a cousin's privilege to the full; inquired—Henry thought more tenderly than was necessary—after her health, then rallied her on her seriousness, talked the usual quantity of nonsense, which women, who know any thing of the world, understand to be matter of course, and then offered some observations on her dress. She complained that the chain had an unsafe clasp, and he offered to take it to the jeweller's to get it repaired—conveying the idea to Henry's mind that he knew where it had been purchased. Mrs. Gascoigne, who hated every one of the Harewells, did not fail to cast in as many inuendoes as she could, to annoy the young barrister, who had too much tact to retort on an elderly rich relative, yet became gradually irritated by his own forbearance. Geraldine was so unhappy as to seem constrained; Henry grew snappish and morose; and the only one of the party who seemed contented with the evening's proceedings was Mrs. Gascoigne. Not that she acknowledged a wish to make any one, particularly her god-child, unhappy; but, like all other discontented people, she did not quite understand why any thing in this world should go smoothly forward, and it was consolatory to imagine that others were as uncomfortable as herself. There are persons in this world who derive much consolation from the belief that many are more unhappy than themselves. Geraldine

was unaccustomed to deception; as long as the five-and-forty guineas had lain dormant in her desk, there was no visible proof of their existence, and she had no temptation to deceive; but the chain coming so palpably before her husband's eyes, had changed altogether the nature of the case, and called her deceptive powers into action. She was, however, a bad actress, and felt so. Her impulses were good.

"I will not," she said, "run a second risk; I will return my aunt her twenty guineas, and not suffer myself to be again tempted: I was fortunate to get off so well last night." She took out the money, and entered her aunt's room.

"You look pale enough," was the morning salutation she received; "and truly, my dear, I am not astonished at it. Mr. Leeson's conduct was very harsh to you last night, and, I confess, I thought rude to me; yes, dear, rude to me—to fly into a passion about a trumpery chain, because, forsooth, *he* was not consulted—to ask if my niece and god-child had *paid* for what she wore—to inquire *how* she got the money—taunting you with your want of fortune."

"Oh, dear aunt, he never thought of that!"

"Permit me to know best, if you please, Mrs. Leeson. If your mother had done as she ought, she would have stood out for pin-money, and not have left you the degrading task of dunning your husband for every little foolish thing—turning men into *molly-cots*—Ah! you may smile if you like, Geraldine; the phrase is not very ele-

gant, but it is very expressive—you will allow *that*, I suppose. However, you were no child of mine, or I would have managed differently, and taught you differently. Men change, my poor girl; and it is quite right for a woman to provide against that change."

"By a large stock of affection?" inquired Geraldine, half amused, and more than half awakened by her aunt's theory.

"No, my dear, but as large a stock of cash as she can muster. Henry makes you an allowance for house-keeping; you do not spend it *all*, I hope?"

"No, aunt; he has given me great credit for good management. I saved nearly five pounds out of my first month's allowance."

"And you told him so?"

"I certainly did. Now, my dear aunt, why do you look so? Where would have been the pleasure of saving without his praise? I saved five pounds, and gave it him."

"And he took it?"

"Yes; of course he did."

"And after that to speak so meanly about the chain! (which, to confess the truth, was a bit of extravagance; but he did not think that)—a pretty clear proof that he expects you to consult him on every inch of ribbon. Don't be a fool, Geraldine. I know the world, and I know that the more you give in, the more you may. Why, you do not expect a *business-man*, such as Mr. Leeson surely is, to suffer you to lay out *his*

money for what you may fancy?—he knows how money grows out of money, too well for that. No; make up your mind to one of two courses—either be content to sink into an upper servant, spending your month's allowance upon the house, and giving in your honest account, or do as I did—as other women do—and keep a little for yourself; you do not know how you may want it; and, from the fuss he made last night about that stupid chain—in public, too—I think you may very easily judge that he intends to draw the purse-strings tight; and you looked all the night as penitent as if you had committed a crime. Well, well, you will know better. I once knew a woman who managed to scrape a purse together so cleverly, that, when her husband got into difficulties, she was able to provide all sorts of little comforts for the house, without the knowledge of the creditors."

"But was that honest?" inquired the young wife, "as it was saved out of his means."

"But surely he intended it to have been spent?"

"Yes, very likely," replied Mrs. Leeson, who was musing on her husband's rudeness; and then she added, "Yet such a system destroys mutual confidence."

"My poor foolish child!" retorted her aunt, with an ominous shake of the head—"My poor foolish child! you do not surely believe that your husband tells you every thing—makes *you* a confidant! A handsome, would-be-fashionable young man make his wife his confidant!—tell her every

thing! Why, what a fool you must be!—ah ah!” and the old crackling laugh grated on Geraldine’s heart. “By the way,” resumed the adviser, “who was with you when you bought that chain?”

“My cousin.”

“Oh! and you told Mr. Leeson that, too, I suppose.”

“No, I did not; but I would in a moment, for I saw no harm in it.”

“Well my dear he *would*; he’s as jealous as a Turk. I would not wonder he thought that Arthur Harewell had given you that chain.”

“I told him mamma gave me the money.”

“Oh! ah! so you did; I daresay he thought her a great fool, for he must know how little she has to spare; however, dear, there’s an end of it now. Take my advice—do not invite Arthur to the house yourself, keep what money you have safely, and add to it whenever you can. You’ll find Henry, with all his love, will draw the purse-strings tighter and tighter every year; it’s always the way with those business-men: and men of independence are just as bad in the other way, they draw in to meet their own greedy extravagance.”

Geraldine was so confounded by the variety of new ideas—the suspicion that she did not possess her husband’s confidence, that he insulted her by his jealousy, that let her be as confiding as she would, she would meet with no return, that he was, or would be, avaricious, not from

want but caprice—all caused her such pain, that she retired to her room to find relief in tears, without returning the remainder of her money. If she had preconceived notions upon the subject—if her mind had been decided that, *let her husband's conduct be what it would, her duties, solemnly pledged at the altar, remained the same*, all would have been well. But, poor thing, she had no fixed principles to build on. Her cousin called a couple of hours after, and she did not ask him to dinner. When her husband returned he found her languid and cold, with an indescribable air of offended dignity; whereas he, on the other hand, felt constrained and afflicted at a duplicity he had discovered for the first time. If *either* had confided in the other, how much after misery would have been spared to both!

Mr. Leeson heard from the footman that Mr. Harewell had called, and thought it was odd his wife did not as usual mention his name, with those of two or three other visitors; then he asked her abruptly, “Why she had not detained her cousin Arthur to dinner?”

Her aunt's insinuation as to her husband's jealousy immediately occurred to her, and she stammered and blushed so as to recall vividly to his mind the young man's frivolous manner on the preceding evening; and the consequence was, that both felt exceedingly unhappy.

## CHAPTER III.

IT is not to be wondered at that Mr. Leeson suffered a good deal of anxiety; for it so happened he had discovered that his wife's mother was exceedingly distressed for money before she had quitted his house to return to her own; and, with a delicacy which deserved increased confidence, he had placed a sum at her disposal as she was leaving London, intreating her not to mention it to Geraldine, lest the shadow of obligation might give her pain. The old lady thanked him with tears of gratitude, confessing that she had wished to borrow a few pounds from her daughter, but thought it better not, lest it might lead to uncomfortable feelings. This proved to him that his beloved wife—she whom he loved with all the passion of a strong, truthful, and fervent affection—she in whose simple purity he trusted, and would have trusted for ever—had deceived him by a mean falsehood. If she had not returned him the five pounds already mentioned, he would again have taxed her with forming a private purse, but that act militated so strongly against such a supposition, that he repudiated the idea for one far more painful—he believed she had either accepted the chain from her cousin, or borrowed the money from him.

Henry Leeson's nature was none of the softest. He entertained the highest possible sense of female honour. Whatever the fact might be, he

boasted of always making his affections subject to his reason. And on that same evening, when they were alone, he said, after about twenty minutes had been spent in a restless and painful dialogue, in which neither were explicit, yet both saw that something remained untold—he said, sternly, for the fair and gentle face he looked upon had lost the radiance of truth, “Thus much, Geraldine—thus much; beware at and attempt to deceive me; for, if you do so once, you will never do so a second time.”

The young wife wept, and wept bitterly; but though only four-and-twenty hours had elapsed since he dried her tears so anxiously, yet then he had not thought, and calculated, and placed one circumstance with another, to see how they tallied; and he had clung to the hope that she would have frankly told the truth when they were alone—he had pictured her with her pale weeping face, he had framed the gentle counsel, and heard the fond promise; he had hoped even that she had gone in debt rather than have been obliged to any man for a golden gift, which she feared to confess. Her aunt’s extreme niggardliness prevented the supposition that she had bestowed anything upon her save what even misers give—advice. Yet little did he imagine what the nature of that advice would be. Young men in general are careful enough as to what male society their wives mingle with; but they ought to be even more careful as to the female. A woman is on her guard amongst men, but

amongst women her heart and ears are both open ; yet what pernicious notions may she not imbibe from that dangerous class of persons called “ women of the world.”

It would be almost impossible to trace how one small suspicion grew out of another ; how Geraldine’s heart heaved and ached under the consciousness that her husband regarded every thing she did with a prejudiced eye, and listened to her words with a jealous ear ; how, having asked him for some fancy of hers, when he was in a mood not to grant a favour, he refused ; and her aunt, who unfortunately happened to be present, took occasion to exult in the truth of her evil prophecy.

“ You see, Geraldine, I was right ; every husband grows selfish sooner or later ; and a poor woman who has no spirit is sure to be trampled on—never has a shilling to spend on herself, unless *she manages.*”

Geraldine had no broad ideas as to the duties of wedded life. She, happily for herself, had never thought of discussing the rights of women apart from the rights of men. She did not seek to disturb the beautiful harmony of nature, by setting up the weak against the strong—by endeavouring to reason a woodbine into becoming an oak ; but she did think sometimes that as the oak did not afford much generous support to the woodbine, the woodbine might mauage a little artificial support for itself. So she fell, by degrees, into her aunt’s plan. She stinted the

house to fill her private purse, and this narrowness rendered his home any thing but comfortable to her husband ; but even this was not the worst. She, who had felt and mourned over her first untruth with so much real bitterness of spirit, had become accustomed to falsehood ; it was necessary to tell one little lie to hide another ; the holy beauty of truth had altogether departed from her. Whenever her conscience reproached her, she whispered to it “that she could not help it—that if Henry had continued the Henry he was at first, it would have been different—that it was his fault—that he was severe—that he had grown suspicious—that as he often blamed her without a cause, she might as well have a little of her own way as not—that he was frightfully stingy.” It was impossible for any one to have proceeded in this course, without becoming morally degraded ; it is wonderful how slowly yet surely this degradation progresses ; until, when a review of the past takes place, we are astonished that what *were principles* should *now* be called *prejudices*, and marvel at our past simplicity. Such were generally Geraldine’s reflections. She almost smiled to think how she had blushed and trembled at an equivocation ; but such smiles are only as gleams of sunshine on a sepulchre, and when they pass, woe, woe, for the rottenness within !

Arthur Harewell always came to London in term time, and sometimes remained until it had been long over. Henry Leeson would hardly

confess to himself that he regarded him with suspicion; and yet, though they frequented the same club, walked together, went to the theatres together, and Arthur was the constant guest of his table, Mr. Leeson was any thing but comfortable in his society.

In indulging this feeling, he did his wife gross injustice. She loved her husband, and practised no deception towards him, except on the one point; but it would have been next to impossible to convince him of this. She was universally admired; her loveliness was matured into beauty. She was never absent from her husband's thoughts for ten minutes together; and yet he was the only person who appeared indifferent to her.

Her memory was not always true to her falsehood: she often betrayed herself. She had lost her husband's respect. The vase was broken, and though much of the perfume remained, he did not seek to treasure it, but rather desired to have the power of turning from it altogether: each had a separate interest. And when he looked upon the only child God had given them—a girl—his heart sunk within him. “For,” he said, “she will grow up a liar like her mother!” To do Geraldine justice, she endeavoured, strange as it may seem, to impress her daughter with a love of truth; but her ideas of right and wrong, in their bravest and highest sense, were confused—and precept in education is nothing worth without practice.

She had not seen her mother since the birth of her child, as she had been abroad from ill health. Her aunt visited her but too often, for she became, unfortunately, the depositary of her secrets, and still advised her to keep her purse closer than ever, as be sure her child, as she grew up, would want so many things its father would not give it.

It would be impossible to particularise the various instances of mistrust that occasioned so many bickerings between Geraldine and her husband; but they had led to this result—that, even when she spoke the truth, her husband did not believe her. A disbelief in her truth as regarded money matters, was not the only doubt that passed through and occasionally took possession of Henry's mind. He fastened upon her a careless impropriety of conduct, which was altogether apart from her nature; and never did she wear the chain which occasioned her first act of dissimulation, without its rendering him silent and morose. At last her mother, whom much sickness had made a wiser woman, came to visit them; and so great was the change apparent in both, that she resolved to probe its cause as far as she was able.

## CHAPTER IV.

“How is it, Geraldine,” said her mother to Mrs. Leeson—“how is it that you and Henry are so changed in your manner to each other? Four years ago, I left you all affection; now, I find you hardly civil—this is very bad.”

“It is,” replied her daughter; “but it is not my fault. Henry is perpetually insulting, by asking me the most frivolous questions, and then sneering at my replies. He never believes a word I say. It was only yesterday he took our child on his knee, and read her such a homily on the beauty of truth that she looked at him, poor innocent, in fear and astonishment, without understanding his meaning, and then he looked at me. Oh! mother, I wish I had never married. It is very true what my aunt says—you never can know how a man will turn out.”

“Your aunt, my dear, is a very bad counsellor. I fear she has caused mischief between you.”

“Oh, no! but she told me how it would be. Why, before we were six months married, he took me to task about a chain! But that is nothing; I assure you he is niggardly in the extreme.”

“You must be wrong, Geraldine,” said her mother, earnestly; “indeed, you must be wrong. When I left you to go abroad—though I did not tell you so, lest it would make you unhappy—my finances were deplorably reduced. He ques-

tioned me upon them with the greatest delicacy ; and when he found how I was circumstanced, as he was handing me into the carriage, he slipped a purse containing a hundred guineas into my hand."

Geraldine felt her colour change. "But how did he find that out, in the first instance ?" she inquired, after a pause.

"I really do not know," replied her mother ; "but you remember, dear, I was always a very bad dissembler. Your aunt says I can be seen through in a moment, which I dare say is the case, and I do not care about it. What does it matter when one has nothing to conceal ! I never led him to suppose that you had a penny, or that I had sixpence beyond my small annuity ; so I confessed that when I came to pay you the bridal visit, I had not five pounds in the world."

"Good heavens !" exclaimed Geraldine, the falsehood she had framed as to her mother giving her ten pounds towards the purchase of the chain, and the effect it must have had upon her husband's mind, flashing upon her for the first time. "Oh ! mamma, why did you not tell me this before ? What must my husband have thought of me ?"

"Thought of *you*, my dear ?" replied her mother, not understanding her allusion. "Why, what had you to do with it ? He knew, as I have told you, perfectly well that you had nothing whatever to do with the matter ; but I called it very handsome of him—very handsome in-

deed." And the lady resumed the perusal of her book, thinking it better to let this anecdote of her son-in-law's generosity operate of itself upon her daughter. Geraldine felt the blood rush to her head, and in another moment she was chill and trembling. She went to her own room, and traced back circumstance to circumstance. She saw clearly that on that evening she must have appeared guilty of duplicity. She remembered her husband's deep-seated and constant love and affection previous to that event; how her every wish was anticipated by him. She remembered how pleased, how happy he looked, when she gave him the five pounds she had saved from her housekeeping; and she could not but acknowledge that all the satisfaction she had received from her secret peculations had been gall and wormwood, in comparison to the approving smiles which she now knew how she had at first forfeited. Truly her tears were many and sincere. She would willingly have retraced her steps had she known how; but she felt she had not strength to do so. She fancied confession more humiliating than deception; and, moreover, Henry's late unkindnesses were so numerous and so severe, that she forgot, when recalling them, how much was owing to the suspicions she herself had created.

She resolved to confide in her mother the particulars regarding the chain, hoping she should be able to prevail on her to say, if she was questioned on the subject, that she had borrowed the

money to lend her ; for, as I have said before, lies yield ample fruitage. She had of late mentioned some of her perplexities to her cousin ; and here I am forced to pause, to observe that one of the most foolish acts of a young woman's life is the confiding in any man, either what she fears to intrust to her husband, or any complaint against him. It is almost always sure to betray itself ; and if it does not, the step is so imprudent, so likely to lead to results affecting her character, and certainly to affect her conduct, that of all things it ought to be the most dreaded, the most avoided. It is seldom that a woman, resolved to bear and forbear, cannot succeed in winning her husband's friendship in the end. When this is really impossible—which I think can only be the case when a man is thoroughly unprincipled—may God help her ! It is wiser for her not to complain of him she has sworn to “love, honour, and obey.” Her own sex are, with a few most honourable exceptions, too feeble for friendship ; and where there is youth and beauty, men are dangerous friends. It is wiser, then, I repeat, under such circumstances, for a woman to conceal her sorrows, and to alleviate them by active and dutious employment, rather than by idle and dangerous repinings. If scandal catches her character, injury will be, at best, sustained in setting it free ; and the wretchedness of having been doubted, when forgotten by friends (if it ever be,) is never unremembered by her upon whom suspicion has rested. The very reputa-

tion of having a male friend is injurious to a young English wife. It is only a vigorous mind that can bear being thus shut in with itself. A firm and noble one *will* bear it, because it is right; and perhaps, after years of firm endurance, be rewarded by the friendship it has so richly deserved—the friendship of *him* in whom a young heart trusted.

Geraldine loved her cousin really as a sister loves a brother; *but no more*. She had never bestowed upon him an atom of affection that she need have blushed to own even to her husband; and though her cousin may be acquitted of all premeditated wrong towards her, he was not averse to being rallied on the preference evinced for him by his lovely relative. He assured every one “that it was a brother and sister affection,”—that, “it was impossible it could be anything else, as they had been children together”—that “Geraldine was too devoted to her husband to indulge even a friendship for any one—except her cousin.” But he did not say these things frankly, and seriously, and boldly, as it becomes a man of high honour to do; he said them with a smile or a shrug, or a *dolce* sort of self-satisfied expression, which made the careless young men of his acquaintance declare him a “lucky fellow,” and married men say “that Leeson should look after his wife;” while matrons and old maids began to throw something of significance into their countenances when they observed that “they had met Mrs. Leeson and her handsome

cousin in the square ;” and some were malicious enough to forget to add that she was accompanied also by her child or a female friend.

Most unhappily, her husband had become so irritable and suspicious, that she excused herself for her constant deceptions. He had long found it impossible to distinguish between her truth and falsehood ; he had become unjust to her virtues ; for she was a most devoted parent, while he believed that she was indifferent to her child. When she told the story of the chain—that origin of all the evil—to her mother, the old lady, instead of going at once to her son-in-law, explaining it to him, and showing that the advice of her aunt had caused her to step aside from the straight path—that it was *she* who urged her to form a private purse—and by this odious system undermined their mutual confidence ; instead of doing this, she set herself to frame a “ reason for the lie.” And why ? Because the little girl was the aunt’s god-child, and she solaced herself, by determining that “ she would certainly leave her all she had, if she were not displeased ; but if Geraldine broke her word—if she forgot that she had promised not to tell—all the previous concealments would have been made in vain, and they would lose the property. Henry would be sure to ‘ fly out ’ about it, and what would be the end of it ?” The good lady quite forgot that Geraldine had promised to conceal the gift from her, as well as from her husband ; but her ideas of right and wrong could all be set aside by in-

terest ; we have wonderful tendernesses towards those who break their words for our especial sakes. Geraldine was, in point of fact, incapacitated, in the sight of God, from making the promise her aunt required of her, on the morning of her marriage ; because the **OATH**, so important and so engrossing, which she had taken at the altar, virtually delegated her husband the depositary of her acts, thoughts, and secrets.

How despicable a picture of human nature does this perpetual bowing down to Mammon portray ! and how vain and insignificant does it appear, when contrasted with so high, so holy a thing as truth ! Oh ! if those who are heedless of words and their import, did but know the inestimable value of this “bright ornament”—if they had but traced, as I have done during my pilgrimage of observation through life, the cares, and toils, and tangled weariness that *must* follow in the train of falsehood, however small it may appear at first—if they could witness the contempt that dogs the liar to a despised grave—if they could see the family disunions, the heart-beatings and heart-breakings, originating in an untruth, no larger than that grain of mustard-seed that became an outspreading tree—if they could be brought to feel the base, mean, paltry cowardice of a lie—how earnestly they would pray to be delivered from its insidious temptation !

Geraldine’s mother, I have already said, was exactly one of those who had neither been educated to become a mother, nor in the knowledge to teach

the duties of domestic life to her child. She was, like scores of others, weak, warm, and as brainless as a woman could well be, who went through the etiquettes of life with propriety and exactness. She thought herself acting with extraordinary tact and discretion, when she entered the small library where Mr. Leeson sat by himself when at home in the evening, and, shutting the door with a peculiarly silent and mysterious air, asked if she might intrude upon him for a few moments. He placed a chair for her, and, laying down his book, prepared to listen.

Henry Leeson was more changed than men usually are in years so few, and yet he dressed better, was quite as handsome, when in society conversed more fluently, many thought more agreeably, for a dash of vinegar curdled the oil, and rendered him pungent and racy. But his features had lost their affectionate, confiding, easy expression ; his face had grown sharp as a lawyer's seeking flaws in an indictment ; he could not sit for five minutes looking straight forward, but twisted his eyes to see sideways, and his head to look behind—he had grown suspicious.

The old lady had a difficult card to play, and, of course, played it badly, floundering through muddy sentences, until at last she ventured to regret "that her dear Harry had not been in the drawing-room—he used to be so fond of music—and she had prevailed on Geraldine to sing ;

and Arthur Harewell said he had never heard her in better voice."

Mr. Leeson muttered something about a new book, and Arthur understanding music better than he did, as he heard more of it. And this was answered by an observation, "that more was the pity." And then the gentleman sat, and the lady fidgetted through a long pause—until, with tears of very sincere grief, she declared, in her own simple way, her regrets that two so much attached as her dear son and daughter "were"—(Mr. Leeson shook his head)—"had been," then substituted the sorrowing mother—were now so estranged "without any cause."

Mr. Leeson stiffly said, that "if there had not been cause, there would have been no estrangement—the fault was none of his."

The old lady hit upon one sensible observation by chance—"that in quarrels matrimonial, both parties were generally to blame."

He bowed; and answered, "It might be so, in a degree."

"For instance," she continued, "you were very angry with her long ago, I find, about a foolish chain; and really, Harry, dear, you had no reason."

"The chain was in itself as unoffending," he replied, "as trinkets generally are; but I *had* reason. She told me a falsehood as to her means of purchase. The chain was a gift; yet she assured me she bought it. I have but too

good reason to remember it, as the commencement of all our misery. Why, she even used *your name* as the giver of part of the purchase-money."

"And so I was," murmured forth the feeble-minded woman, unable to raise her eyes; but keeping down the truth by the weight of her sister's riches."

"Nay!" he exclaimed, "how could that be, when you yourself — But you must remember certain passages which prevent a possibility of that."

"She wished so for the chain," said the old lady, "that I borrowed ten pounds to make up the money."

Mr. Leeson rose from his seat in wrathful indignation, and but that the being before him was a frail, aged woman, could not have contained himself. "You really must excuse me for saying I doubt this. I should, indeed, grieve to feel that those grey hairs were dishonoured by a falsehood, to screen a child who has no feeling for herself.

Self-degradation forced itself upon the feeble-minded mother, and she only said that she hoped he "would permit her still farther to explain."

"Pardon me," he replied, "if I decline any future conversation upon this subject. When I married Geraldine, I imagined I read in the brightness of her sunny face the brightness of truth. I loved her with the entire fulness of my heart. I would have trusted her with my life; I

*had* trusted her with more—for every man when he marries trusts his wife with his honour. I pictured long years of enduring affection ; and, above all, in return for the most devoted love that man can feel towards woman, I asked for her confidence—her *unbroken* confidence. Nothing else could satisfy me. It must be frank—spontaneous—untainted. My conviction is, that **UNMITIGATED TRUTH** is *the stronghold of domestic happiness*. She *knew* that such was my opinion ; she had heard me say a hundred times that sooner or later sin followed concealment. I did not want my wife to appeal to me on every occasion, or feel it necessary to render an account of her personal expenses ; such details are irksome to a man ; but I expected that she should have no interest apart from mine—no expenditure that was to be considered private—no stealing from a house purse, to put into one called, for distinction's sake, ‘her own.’ Mine was at all times open to her hand. If I urged upon her the investigation of accounts, it was only to lead her to those habits of exactness which are inseparable from sound domestic management. I remember how my heart beat with joy when she brought me the savings of her early housekeeping ; if it had been thousands, instead of pounds, I could not have rejoiced more sincerely ; it was a proof of frankness on the very point upon which I had depended so much. I felt I had a sweet confiding friend, and that our interests were the same. How soon this changed, I also well re-

member" — He paused; and then abruptly added, "What need she have denied that her cousin Arthur gave her that chain?"

"Indeed," exclaimed her mother, earnestly; "indeed, indeed, you do her wrong; Arthur never gave it her. If you have for so long a time indulged this injustice, no wonder you have made her and yourself so wretched."

"My dear lady," replied Mr. Leeson, calm even to bitterness, "I *know* he did; and in the gift, or the taking, there was no sin; but there *was* sin in the lie. It destroyed my confidence in her; it implanted the vile weed *suspicion* in my bosom; and ever since, as if a spell were round her, she has heaped duplicity upon duplicity, until now I could not believe truth to be truth coming from her lips." It was most painful to observe the agitation of his feelings speaking through his eloquent face. "I believe," he added, "I hope and trust she is free of all other sin; I *hope* it; I—I—believe it; but I cannot believe HER. It was only this very day I came to the determination of removing our child from an influence which must in the end destroy her, as it has destroyed her mother."

"You are not surely going to be guilty of the cruelty of taking her child from her!" ejaculated its grandmother; "you cannot be in earnest. What will even her friends think? Oh! Henry, you would not brand my child as unfit to be a mother! What would the world say?"

"Madam," he replied, "there is a higher

tribunal than *that*, where parents will be called upon to give an account of the children committed to their care. Mine is already practised in deception. If I say one thing, and my wife teaches another, what can be expected but that our child will in her turn deceive us both?"

" You are too severe ; indeed, you are," reiterated the poor lady, who had altogether lost sight of her first object in this fresh trouble, and did not seem to understand how much she had added to the evil feeling she thought to obliterate by her poor subterfuge. " Oh ! Henry, dear Henry, remember how you loved her !"

" If," answered the afflicted husband, " if I could forget that, I should not suffer as I do."

" Had she been a faithless wife, you could not punish her more severely than you propose to do."

" There are various kinds of infidelity not recognized by law," he replied. " If I believed her guilty in the sense you mean, she should not shelter for a moment here ; and yet there are men, who, with less show of cause, have branded their wives. Now, do not agitate yourself on *that* score ; I make no charge against her. I believe her pure ; but where is the tender faith, the confiding love, THE TRUTH, that should be the woman's THRONE. However, my dream is past ; my resolution taken. I will do my best to prevent any man being deceived by my child, as I have been deceived by *her*. You are, perhaps, the most fit person to tell your daughter of

my determination. In removing my child, I remove the joy, the light, the solace, of my own existence; but it is for her own good. She shall not return until her principles are fixed, or her mother's course of conduct entirely changed."

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## CHAPTER V.

UNFORTUNATELY, Mr. Leeson had selected a powerless messenger, who, of course, inclined to the other side, and who felt keenly, what even most silly women feel, the love of offspring.—Instead of keeping secret as the grave her son-in-law's intention, with garrulous weakness she sought sympathy from those hundred and one "dear friends," who immediately set their own versions of the story afloat; and while but a few saw and understood the father's intention, the mass "conjectured" and "hinted" the "real reason." "Poor Mr. Leeson! how generous of him to overlook what had occurred, and keep *her* (his wife) in his house; no wonder he should remove his child; of course, *her* mother would make the best of it;" and so forth.

Geraldine looked upon her husband's resolve as an act of wanton tyranny and cruelty. Having ceased to honour the straightforward truth, she could not believe the one stated to be the true

reason of his determination, and, blinded by sorrow and anger, she induced her cousin Arthur to interfere. Women talk and talk, outrage and anger each other, and their words are as nought. Who heeds or cares for them after they are spoken? But men's words are uttered to be remembered and acted upon. Mr. Leeson was indignant at any man presuming to interfere in his domestic concerns. Words succeeded each other with angry rapidity, until neither could call to mind how the unfortunate chain was first alluded to. Arthur Harewell, *then*, boldly and fearlessly declared that he never gave it to his cousin; upon which Mr. Leeson gave him the lie direct. The usual consequences followed, Arthur Harewell received a ball in his shoulder, and Mr. Leeson, also wounded, was conveyed home, where his agonised wife, throwing herself on her knees by his side, bitterly lamented that her aunt's gift had been so fatal. Now, indeed, she spoke the truth. The sight of her first and only love, his lacerated arm bleeding, and his features white as a maiden's shroud, recalled her better nature. What, in that hour, did she care for her aunt's displeasure?—what for the wealth her sordid fingers had grappled together? She believed **HE** was dying, and dying with the conviction of her utter worthlessness. She did not even seek to extenuate her own fault, while she traced it to its origin; and yet *there*, on her knees, while pouring out her soul in sincerity and truth, she saw she was not believed.

How could she convince him? In a state bordering on frenzy she wrote to her aunt, imploring her to ratify her words, acknowledging her kindness towards herself, but showing what its effects had been. To this appeal she received no answer. The proof, however, that she was able to lay before her husband, at last convinced him that her first fault—her first falsehood—did not originate in herself. Before he rose from his sick-bed, for mental agitation, combined with his wound, terminated in fever, her aunt had died; and her mother was certainly the only one of the family who regretted to find that the legacy she left her niece was characteristic of her sarcasm. “And my niece, Geraldine Leeson, I give and bequeath, instead of the whole of my property, as I had intended, the sum of one shilling, to buy a padlock for her foolish lips.”

I wish I could say here, after the most approved novel fashion, that, so reconciled, Mr. and Mrs. Leeson lived happily together to the end of their days. Not so. Henry Leeson, though a strict, was a high-minded and generous man, and with such a character even his erring wife was safe from reproach; but the effect of years of misconduct, of *any* kind, cannot be obliterated by sorrow. Repentance works well for the penitent, but the world is little cognisant thereof. The duel had stamped Geraldine in the eyes of that world as a woman, if not of sin, of levity; this in truth in a married woman is so closely akin to sin, that there is but one Power which

can discern the difference. When familiar faces turned aside as she passed, when she walked up the steps of the parish church ungreeted, her husband was by her side, and she felt her arm as closely pressed to his heart as when he supported her, a lovely, loving bride, from the altar; but even then she felt indebted to his generosity. She knew that his confidence, though she hoped returning, had not returned. When to prove to the world his perfect conviction as to the virtue of his wife, he paraded town leaning upon Arthur Harewell's arm, the knowledge of the necessity for such conduct made her ashamed of her own shadow.

“Take my child from me now, Harry,” she said, with bitter, bitter tears, and her head bent almost to his feet, “and I will not complain. Send her where some one of higher and holier mind will strengthen and establish her in what is right. Send her where the duties of her sex and station will be brought clearly before her eyes, and where there is no danger of her confounding right and wrong. At any sacrifice of my own, I would save her from the sufferings I have inflicted and endured.”

This, indeed, was the language of truth, and Henry felt it, and rejoiced; but his joy was sobered by the knowledge, the fearful knowledge, of what the world said, and the dread that she did not yet understand the perfect and entire union of interests necessary to the happiness of domestic life. Union of sympathies is the hap-

py effect of chance, but a union of interests is a positive duty; and so at last Geraldine felt it.

Time passed on. Mr. Leeson, although he despised the feeble mind of his wife's mother, and kept her out of the way of her grandchild, ministered liberally to her necessities. His daughter grew up in mind all that the fondest parent could desire, although her fragile form and sensitive face told of constitutional delicacy; and he had almost forgotten that ever he doubted his wife's truth. They had removed into a new neighbourhood, and formed new friends. The son of one of these, a man of high rank, was paying his address to their daughter; and not only were the young girl's affections engaged, but both parents were delighted at the prospect of her happiness.

Father and son were dining one day at Mr. Leeson's splendid country seat, when the old gentleman, who was chiefly remarkable for extreme propriety, and was moreover exceedingly deaf, said, as they were chatting over dessert, "By the way, Leeson, my cousin, Sir George, was telling me an odd story about a person of your name, no relation I suppose—eh?" Mr. Leeson did not know. "No; but it could not be—very improper indeed if it was. Leeson is a *general*, I do not mean to say a *common* name, but a general one. Something about an affair that ought to have given employment to the gentlemen of the long robe; but the lady, who was a dreadful story-teller, managed to con-

vince her husband of her innocence, though she convinced nobody else. And only fancy, by Jove! the husband parading St. James's Street arm-in-arm with the very cousin whom he had winged! Now, did you ever hear any thing so absurd? How the fellows at the club windows must have laughed!"

Poor Mrs. Leeson! After the lapse of years, to hear this at such a moment! She was carried out of the room fainting. An explanation followed, and the match was, at least for a time, broken off.

The shock was of too severe a nature to be endured by so gentle and tender minded a girl as Miss Leeson. She had known her mother only as good and pure. She had been more proud of her character and virtue than of anything else in the whole world; but after that fatal dinner she never spoke upon the subject, nor asked a question, until at the very last. Within an hour of her death (and she died within a month,) raising herself on her pillow, while her parents were at either side, she folded her arm round her father's neck, and drawing his ear close to her lips, whispered, "Tell me, father—tell me truth—was *she* guilty?"

"No, dearest—God knows, she was not."

The girl's face became radiant with joy, and the last word she spoke was a repetition of the sound she loved so well—"My mother!—my mother!—my mother!" And then she passed away, as the leaves from the summer cistus, as

fragile and as fair—the first rough blast of a rough world had borne her to the earth.

For years and years her parents lived, two mourning creatures, he strengthening her, and she, patient and silent, save to the young, whom she counselled, as I do you—that when you wed, do it not lightly; but when done, endeavour as much as lieth in you to be of one mind and one interest in all things.



## CLEVERNESS.

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### CHAPTER I.

IT would be difficult to picture a more delightful village than East-court ; its fine old manor-house, combining the architecture of half a dozen reigns, bound together by ivy, the growth of at least two centuries ; its straggling grotesque houses, with high gables and tall chimneys, fenced along the road by broad yew hedges, cut here and there into various patterns—owls, and peacocks, and arches, where small birds had nested time out of mind.

Yes ; East-court *was* a pleasant village. There was in the centre of a sort of common green that flanked one side, a pond, large enough to entitle it to the dignity of being termed “a lake.” But the people of East-court having originally been an unambitious race, were satisfied that the pond should be simply called a pond—and a beautiful pond it was. Two noble willows extended their branches nearly to the water’s midst, and a clump of mingled holly, and tapering feathery birch, was so beautiful in its growth and colour, that an artist once came ten miles to

sketch it; a fact which the old landlord of the “Three Bee-Hives” repeated several times each day of his life, forgetting altogether, good old soul, that every one in East-court was aware of a circumstance so flattering to the beauty of their long-loved home. The cottages at East-court were so disposed, as to add to the effect of the larger dwellings—pretty white and brown erections; the walls as white as lime and labour could make them; and the dark-brown thatch nearly covered by those sweet and beautiful climbers which belong of right to the cottage homes of England. On the very summit of an abrupt conical hill, that sprung up suddenly at the back of the manor-house, was a windmill, with wide extended arms and snow-white sails; and at the foot of the hill on the other side, guarded by some venerable trees, stood East-court church with the adjoining parsonage-house. There were but few shops at East-court, for the village was only three miles from the county town. But the very shops partook of the picturesque character of this truly English hamlet; and many persons declared that there never was so quiet, so venerable, and yet, withal, so cheerful a village as East-court, or, as the very old people called it, “East-court o’ the Hill.”

It might well be a cheerful village; the gentleman who resided in the manor-house was a magistrate, and landlord of every adjacent dwelling. He was, in all acts of love and charity, a second Sir Roger de Coverley; and had a bro-

ther, a physician, who had one wing of the old manor-house fitted up as a surgery and dispensary; but he never took fee for advice, or payment for medicine, from any human being; feeling—at least so it would appear, from the alacrity with which he dispensed both—that he was under particular obligation to all who took his prescriptions, and was never happy after a baby was born in the parish until it was vaccinated. It was rare, indeed, to meet with such men as the squire and his good brother. Well might East-court be the very paradise of English villages. I have said nothing of the rector; but certainly, unless he had carefully laboured in, and pruned and trimmed his vineyard, the old would not have descended to their graves with such hope and humility, nor would the young have lived together with such peace and good-will. For the rest, a dancing, music, and a species of drawing master, who combined drawing and writing together, made each the round of the neighbourhood once a week; thus the simple-minded people imagined that the means of “a polite education” were safely secured to their children; and the village school was under the immediate dominion of the parish-clerk and his wife, and endowed in every way by the lord of the manor, so that the peasant class were considered well provided for as to their sources of information. I could say a great deal more in favour of East-court and its inhabitants as they were about fifteen years ago, but perhaps have detailed enough

to create an interest for them, and may be permitted to pass on to the day on which a story connected with its inhabitants may be considered to open.

“A new family, a rich and respectable family, did you say, Isaac, wanting the Deerstone house, where Mr. Rowley died?” inquired Squire Russel of East-court, of his land-steward Isaac Heywood.

“Yes, your honour,” replied Isaac, bowing; “a lady and gentleman, Mr. and Mrs. Diggons by name, three young masters, two young Misses (doll-looking young things,) seven servants, a tutor, and a governess.”

“Diggons,” repeated the squire, who had a little leaning towards aristocratic names; “Diggons; it is not an old name, Isaac, though it may belong to respectable people.”

“Certainly, sir; he’s a fine gentleman, and wears chains and rings; a fine gentleman, and has (his man says) a great library, for his lady is very clever; indeed, his man says, they are an extraordinary *clever* family.”

“We never, I think, had a family of that description, Isaac, in the village,” answered Mr. Russel, after a pause. “I cannot say I like people who appear more clever than their neighbours. However, this is perhaps a prejudice, and we should guard against prejudices. We will look into the references.”

The references were looked into, and Mr. Diggons was found an eligible tenant for Deer-

stone. The arrival of the “clever family” occasioned more than the ordinary commotion, for they brought with them various things that the good people of the village had only heard of in an obscure manner—chemical apparatus, electrifying machines, various astronomical instruments; in short, some of the older and simpler people regarded Mr. Diggons very much in the light of a necromancer, and the small, pale, acute-faced tutor as his familiar—something or other which they did not like to name.

When everything was settled, and every one got used to everything, Mr. Russel and his brother, Mr. Graham Russel, agreed that the Diggonses were a good set of people, eaten up with a desire to be celebrated, which of course prevented its accomplishment; leaving town where they were nobodies, to reside in the country, where they hoped to be “somebodies,” at the very least, labouring to acquire conversable knowledge of abstruse sciences, not being particular *who* approved, as long as approbation was bestowed; unable to persevere to the amount of being informed, and yet having a smattering of everything. Bating this eager thirsting after admiration—not after science for its own noble sake, but for the gaping admiration of the many—the family were kindly, cheerful, and hospitable people; not selfish, either, in their pursuits, but willing to inform others. Three or four self-thinking inhabitants of East-court agreed with Mr. Russel and his brother in their rational

estimate of the new family; but the many opened wide their mouths, and gave their "most sweet voices" in applause. The Diggonses were pronounced to be the most "talented people in England!" Science has many triflers in her train; and certainly amongst them she numbered every member of the Diggons family; from Mr. Diggons, who trifled with all the sciences, down to pretty little pale Elizabeth, who sighed and smiled over a miniature galvanic battery.

On the left-hand side of the village, commanding a view of the green, the huge pond, and the picturesque cottages beyond, was a pretty cheerful-looking house; "happy" you would have called it, for inanimate things can be so placed, so garnished, as to look happy. The draperies within the windows were of white muslin trimmed with blue silk lace and fringe; and the trellis-work outside was almost concealed by the wreaths of flowers that owed their luxuriance and beauty to much care and a warm southern aspect. There was an ample bow window and several other long narrow ones, that seemed playing hide-and-seek among the roses and myrtles that were always in blow; and the chimneys were tall and square, and the gables very high. There was also a conservatory, and you could see that, besides plants, it contained several birds of splendid plumage. In short, the outward appearance of the dwelling combined so much that was tasteful and expensive, the looker-on was assured there was both

wealth and taste within the latter, keeping the former in subjection.

This house had the quaint name of East-in-Rest, why, I know not, and no one at East-court seemed to think it strange. It was almost as large, and of the same date as the manor-house, and had been, time out of mind, inhabited by the same family, once as numerous as honourable, but now dwindled down to a widow and two children—a boy and girl. The lady was still lovely, her children beautiful; the boy, tall, fair, and handsome, but whose movements partook of the irregularity and languor of ill, or at least delicate health; the girl was also fair and delicate, but with an energy and decision of character marking every movement, that deceived even her mother as to her bodily strength. When the “clever family” came to reside at Deerstone, Alfred Erris was nearly seven, and Lucy between eight and nine; and as the two children clung together, gazing at the evolutions of a good-natured macaw, who invariably exercised himself to amuse them, Mrs. Diggons might almost be excused, when returning Mrs. Erris’ visit, for the encomium she injudiciously passed on their beauty.

“Well, Mrs. Erris, you may certainly be proud of their beauty,” she exclaimed; “I never saw two such darlings—loves—quite. I should so like my son Robert to paint them; he does such charming things. There is no doubt but,

if he chose, he could be an R. A. in three months."

"Alfred draws a little," said Mrs. Erris.

"A little!" repeated Mrs. Diggons. "My dear lady, at his age Robert copied the cartoons; but I do not wonder at your spoiling such angels. I assure you I had plenty of struggles with myself ere I could make my boys and girls work. I lost the flower of the flock about five years ago—died, sweet child, in six days, of brain fever! A wonderful memory he had, poor darling; could repeat poetry for two hours by my watch, when only eight years old." It never occurred to Mrs. Erris that this killed him; but she said that though Alfred could not do *that*, he, too, had an excellent memory.

"Which," said the lady, "you must work. Memory, of all things, must be cultivated; but I do not wonder at your spoiling such an angel."

Mrs. Erris assured her that she did not "spoil" him, and in proof thereof, asserted that he could repeat a great number of Watts' hymns.

"Watts' hymns!" answered Mrs. Diggons with an irreverent sneer at the purest child-poetry in any language, living or dead; "such a creature as that should be able to repeat orations from Shakspere and Milton."

"In time," said Mrs. Erris, making a secret resolve that he should do so immediately, and beginning to think that she had really neglected his education.

"Is he fond of the languages?" continued the lady.

"He has commenced Latin, and learnt French and English together orally, I may say," replied the abashed mother.

"Only commenced Latin!" exclaimed Mrs. Diggons in a compassionate tone. "Well, to be sure, he will never *want* it, as they say; but I should have an ambition to see such a noble creature as that 'far on' in everything; but perhaps, if he is not much advanced in languages, he is 'well up' in the sciences."

Mrs. Erris was a timid, gentle woman, very anxious for her children, and fearful lest they should grow to think she had not done her duty.

"Indeed," she replied, blushing, "he hardly knows the meaning of the word. His taste leads him to study; but my good friend Doctor Graham Russel says his brain is already too large, and insists so much on air and exercise, and out-door amusements, that my dear boy is backward, rather, in absolute study; not that he is ignorant; he knows the names of all the trees and flowers, the"—

"Botanical names?" mildly suggested Mrs. Diggons.

"No; the homely English names and their uses," replied the widow; "remember, he is only seven years old."

"Well, well," ejaculated the lady; "I can perfectly understand Dr. Russel's prejudice; he has arrived at that time of life when men look

at improvements suspiciously, because they are not of their time. He is an old man; and if I had minded our family physician even in poor Elizabeth's case, ma'am, she'd have been a disgrace to me; that unhappy curve in her spine, he declared arose from her sitting so closely to the harp, and she was obliged to recline; but during the three years she laid upon a slightly inclined plane, *she never missed a single lesson*, nor did I yield her any indulgence—never suffered her to have an amusing book. ‘No,’ I said to the physician; ‘since she cannot go on with the harp, she shall be remarkable at something else;’ that was my ambition, to have remarkable children. Her nature was soft and gentle, but we hardened it with mathematics and algebra.”

This, at the moment, startled Mrs. Erris. She thought of the deformed girl, and her pale, anxious, thoughtful face, from which every ray of joy seemed banished. She had struck her, at first, as being the only one of this “clever family” who was not superficial. Such had been her first impression. But Mrs. Diggons’ manner was imposing in more senses than one; and the timid, retiring mother, who had really done her duty by not overtasking, and yet sufficiently exercising the infant intellect of her children, felt bitter self-reproach while her new neighbour enumerated the acquirements of her offspring, without calling to mind that one of them had fallen a victim to brain fever, while another was deformed for life.

## CHAPTER II.

ALFRED and Lucy Erris were invited to spend a day with the family at Deerstone ; and—instead of the canter on the pony, the race on the upland lawn, the whoop and merry play, which is the healthy relaxation of healthful children, and which they had expected with an interest which was a pleasure in itself—there was a grand show-off of science, a parade of hard names, a display of precocious understanding, or rather its distorted shadow, which rendered Alfred and Lucy uncomfortable, and Alfred for the first time in his life thoughtful of display, and straining after effect which rendered him unnatural. Mrs. Erris, who dined there, felt thoroughly ashamed of her children. One young Diggons painted, another excelled in languages, another made crude poetry, which, though correct in numbers, was without idea ; and as to the “ologies,” hard words, and parrotted sentences, there was no end of them ! Poor Mrs. Erris wondered why she had suffered her beautiful boy—who looked like a Grecian statue amid plaster and rough stone images—to display his ignorance, and innately resolved to adopt Mr. Diggons’s plan, and abridge his hours of relaxation and exercise, that he might “make the most of time”—a duty doubtless ; but let *how* the most can be made of this gold from God be ascertained before the vain-

est and most injurious of all vain-glories, that of making “show-children” is attempted.

In accordance with her determination, Mrs. Erris dismissed her son’s tutor, (whom Mr. Diggons had pronounced “merely a classic”) for one who was “classical and scientific,” a hard stern man, with an iron constitution; and directed Lucy’s governess to “keep her at work” under the tutor’s direction. There was no difficulty in making these children study—no difficulty in getting them to rise in the morning; their docile and intelligent minds were open to receive, and fertile to produce. In natural capabilities, they were far superior to their showy neighbours; and their moral and thinking qualities were far beyond those of Mr. Diggons’s offspring. Alfred was indeed a boy of the noblest qualities, entering into the spirit of history, comprehending and analysing, idealising, too, until his dry hot hand, flushed cheek, and throbbing brow, would have warned any teacher of feeling and observation, that it was time to lay by the book and the pen, and away into the bright fields, and among the joy-giving and health-giving beauties of nature. And yet this tutor loved the boy; he delighted in him, because he delighted in learning, and because he felt no expressed fatigue in poring over the world of knowledge, which delighted him more and more every day. He knew that he was the only son of an ancient house, and that much depended on him; and he thought how fine it would be to see him carry the highest

honours at Oxford—to feel that he would be more distinguished by his talents and his learning than by the ordinary position he would hold in society by virtue of his family and his wealth.

Lucy was with her brother in all his tasks, taming down her wildness of spirits to assist his labours, and stimulating his exertions, which were anything but childish. The “clever family” were a fair example of the fashion and display of information; their minds even were not half drawn into the exertion; they imitated rather than laboured. This was particularly the case with the healthier portion of the family, who, like their parents, were superficial; but Alfred and Lucy had hearts, feelings, and intellect of the finest texture, an intense love of study, an appreciation of the beautiful, a desire to excel, which, being once awakened, never again slept. They were precisely the children whose minds should have been strengthened rather than taxed, and whose bodies should have been invigorated by air, exercise, and much rest. Mrs Erris, astonished at their progress, which she was vain enough to exhibit to the Diggonses, partly from gratitude that *they* had roused her to urge forward her children, was so delighted at the rapidity with which Alfred mastered every difficulty, that she desired to make Dr. Russel confess that she was right and he was wrong as to the management of her son especially. Since the commencement of her new system, she had but one conversation on the subject with him, and that had certainly

left a painful impression on both their minds. She framed, however, some trifling excuse for calling at the manor house; and after a brief interview with the squire, who had been so much annoyed at her obliging her son to forego his pony exercise to devote more time to study, that he was cold and even stately to the widow of one he had loved like his own child, she sought the doctor in his favourite conservatory.

The doctor was cold enough also, but one of his peculiarities was, his being unable to persevere in anything like coldness towards a lady.

“I wanted you to dine with me to-morrow, my good friend,” said she; “indeed I wished our lord of the manor to come also, but he has received me so strangely, that I had not courage to ask him.”

“We are two old-fashioned old men, my dear Mrs Erris,” replied the doctor; “but somehow you have got new-fangled of late, and we should not be able to avoid finding fault, one of the bad habits common to old friends; so that, perhaps, under these circumstances, it is better for us to stay away.”

“I know what you mean,” answered Mrs. Erris gently; “you allude to Alfred and Lucy. I want you to come and judge for yourself; I want you to *see* how they are improved; that, in fact, is all I desire. I want you to examine the children of your old friend, and I think you will be satisfied that I have done my duty.”

“I am quite satisfied you have *intended* to do

your duty, my dear lady ; quite satisfied of that ; and if it had not been for the stimulus given to your maternal vanity by the arrival of this 'clever family,' I am certain you would have continued blessing and being blessed ; not overtasking, but permitting your children's minds as well as their bodies to strengthen while they grow ; but we shall not agree upon the matter, my dear Mrs. Erris, so perhaps we had better not talk of it ; we shall certainly not agree upon the subject."

" You were the friend my poor husband valued most on earth," said Mrs. Erris after a pause ; " and I cannot bear that you should labour under any false impression. I assure you neither Lucy nor Alfred are ever driven to their tasks."

" So much the worse for children of their rapid yet delicate natures. If they had a disinclination to study, it would prove that their individual minds were not of a quality to injure their bodies ; but the zeal for study requires to be regulated."

" And Mr. Salon does regulate it," said the mother.

" By increasing it," replied the doctor. " The structure of these precocious minds is easily disorganized. It has always seemed to me as extraordinary as unjust, that parents and teachers bestow double the pains upon what are termed *clever* children, to what they do upon those who are dull of comprehension ; whereas the heavier

minds could be wrought with decidedly more safety, and in nine cases out of ten would produce, if not a richer, certainly a more abundant fruitage."

"But," urged Mrs. Erris, "you are arguing as if my children were suffering from too much mental exertion. I assure you the contrary is decidedly the case; they are full of life, full of energy. Mrs. Diggons said she never saw anything in her children like the energy with which my children apply."

"I daresay she did not," replied the doctor. "In the first place, your tutor imparts *knowledge*, not its semblance; and in the next, your children have really a panting after information, a gasping for the beautiful and the ideal, a naturally poetic temperament, which destroys ten for the one it crowns. I remember Alfred restless in his cradle, and weeping at melancholy music; and as to Lucy, the difficulty with her was always to keep her tranquil. You have, my dear lady, applied excitement where you should, in my humble opinion, have removed it."

"But would you have had them grow up in ignorance?" inquired the lady.

"That is so like a woman," said the old bachelor, smiling sadly; "jumping from one extreme to the other. I talked of undue excitement, and you immediately fell back upon extreme ignorance; an excitement is the destruction of health and strength, and is to mind the very pestilence of education. The children were doing very

well, learning as much as at their age they ought to learn without forcing—that is all that children should do."

"But some learn more quickly than others, my dear sir."

"So they do; some require keeping back, others bringing forward, but, with both, *time is the only safe developer and strengthener*. I never knew an instance where a precocious child was not the better for being kept back. It is positively offensive to come in contact with those forced children; to find mammas and papas absurd enough to mistake indications of talent for talent itself, and treating you to little miss or little master's poetry or prose. Well, my dear lady," he added, ashamed of his pettishness, "I have at least to thank you for your patience; you have listened to me, and I thank you. I will go, if you please, to-morrow, if it were only to prove how I value your forbearance; but just look at our flowers and this new forcing house, which, I think, you have not seen, and which our gardener would have, because the clever family have one." Mrs. Erris looked at the flowers; the doctor having set aside the subject they talked of, she knew would not return to it; so she admired the plants, and the good old gentleman's anxiety for Lucy and Alfred was for a few minutes obliterated by the interest he felt in his favourite flowers. On leaving the conservatory for the forcing-house, they found the gardener busied with some plants that had been placed up-

on a stand ; among them was a white moss-rose, its green leaves fading ; the buds, through whose soft moss the faint streak of white was more or less visible, hung their heads, from their feeble and seemingly twisted stems.

“ It won’t do, Tom—all your care won’t do *now*,” said Dr. Russel to the gardener ; if you had been content to urge, not force the plant forward, it might have lived and flourished in the conservatory. Now it is gone—gone for ever.”

“ It was so beautiful, sir,” said the man ; “ I never saw anything more beautiful. I didn’t like to be outdone in early flowering by Mr. Diggons’s gardener, and got more heat on ; and I’m sorry to say this is not the first plant that has served me so ; the blossoms have dropped off many ; so that, after all my care, and though willing to *sacrifice the plant for one good flowering, it won’t always give that, but die away—right away.*”

“ The rose would have been healthy enough in the conservatory, I suppose ?” said the doctor.

“ Bless you, sir, it would have lived long enough to have made a timber tree if I wanted it ; but such fierce forcing cuts them off even before they blossom. It’s a principle in nature, sir ; my old governor never would have anything forced beyond nature. ‘ Thomas,’ he used to say to me, ‘ let us help nature ; let us assist the old gentlewoman as well as we can—she deserves it of us ; and it is our duty, as well as our interest, to keep friends with her, for there’s one thing certain, she won’t stand no nonsense.’ He was

a plain spoken Scotchman, sir ; but, like all of his country, he had a great acquaintance with nature.”

The doctor made no further observation ; but a glance at Mrs. Erris showed him that her face was bathed in tears.

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### CHAPTER III.

ABOVE three years elapsed since the master of East-court manor let Deerstone house to the “clever family ;” and he had more than once hinted to his confidential servant, Isaac Heywood, his belief that he did not think a pair of lawyers could have proved more injurious to the repose of the neighbourhood than the inhabitants of Deerstone ; for, without positively improving, they had unsettled the course of instruction. As Dr. Russel observed, “they had inoculated the whole country with a mental nettle-rash.”

Mr. Diggons’s daughter Elizabeth, who had so long struggled with, or rather submitted to, the spinal affection, which her mother declared should never interfere with her education, died eighteen months after their residence at Deerstone ; yet in no way did this young woman’s fate act as a warning to Mrs. Erris.

Alfred had become one of those extraordinary

boys who dazzle and satisfy—a creature so bright, so glorious, in noting whom, you instinctively pray that a life may be spared to those who live upon its continuance. All observed, except his mother and her new friends, that he outgrew his strength ; his eyes beamed with a deep yet brilliant intelligence ; they were eyes that flashed and burned ; and the delicate tint upon his cheek occasionally flushed into a concentrated crimson spot. It is true he took exercise. He would spring upon a beautiful little Arabian horse, that had succeeded his pony, and away ; using more violent exertion in one hour, than he ought to have done in four ; and then return, over-fatigued, to persuade himself and his mother that “exercise was not good for him.”

Fortune smiled on this favourite of nature. A baronetcy, held by a distant branch of the family, became his by the death of those who stood between him and the distinction, and a large addition in money and estate came with it. Most exceeding joy followed. Alfred was now the last of his race—the very last male of the family who bore the name of Erris—and those who looked upon him, and those who more particularly knew him, thought all that was high and glorious centred in him. Some time after the news was spread, and when the fever of congratulations and arrangements somewhat subsided, Lucy and her brother were together in a little temple, called especially “their own.” Alfred was fourteen, unusually tall, and formed for his age ; and

Lucy might have passed for younger than she was, except that she had quite tamed down her wild spirit, and sometimes looked more thoughtful than girls who have numbered many more than her years. They were seated side by side, reading from the same book silently. There was this difference in their way of reading :—when Alfred met with anything that particularly struck him, his cheek flushed, his eye dilated, *triumphed*, I might say, in the glory of the writer, and he would silently point it out to Lucy. She, on the contrary, immediately began to read aloud to him whatever pleased her, and did not seem to enjoy anything unless he enjoyed it with her.

He had the same feeling towards her, though, as I have said, it was differently expressed, and would lay his finger on the page, and their eyes would meet, his full of light, hers hardly venturing an expression of their own, until she had read his. Sometimes he could not bear even the sound of her silver voice ; he seemed to think that sound disturbs feeling, and that it is only the eye which should drink in the written words of mighty men ; and then, without another word, she would remain hushed, rewarded by a smile or a pressure of her brother's hand for her desire to give him pleasure, by sympathising in his delights—the greatest pleasure youth knows. The attachment of these two young creatures was perfect. He was full of dreams of ambition—ambition of the most lofty, generous character. The youth joyed exceedingly in his new position,

but he joyed still more in what was far beyond his years—in philosophy, in poetry, which he delighted in translating from one language to another, and in all things abstruse as well as beautiful. His disposition was sweet and generous; and when an irritability, which had increased of late so as to give even his mother much concern, caused him to say or do anything that was painful or unjust to the humblest servant, he apologised at once with so much warmth and regret, as to win by his very fault. Like those beautiful flowers which, born of the sun, die by the sun, his very soul opened to the heat and fever of the sun of knowledge, and the more expanded the flower became, the nearer it approached its end. Every one saw this *now*, except those whom it most concerned. The occasional fits of lassitude which succeeded much mental or bodily exertion, his mother attributed to his overgrowth, not to any other cause—to be cured by soups and jellies, and the old-fashioned tonic of “bark and perfume,” which Mrs. Diggons prevailed upon her to exchange for claret. His tutor felt towards this wondrous boy as a skilful mechanist would towards an automaton, upon the construction of which he had expended an existence. Lucy was certainly the only one who *felt* that the youth was not well; but she never thought of *him* and death together. There had been much talk of sending him to Oxford with his tutor, and even that separation his devoted sister could not bear to think of. Before

those children had been given up to such intense study, Lucy had laid in a greater store of strength than her brother, consequently she had not suffered so severely. Her anxiety for him wore her more than her studies, though much that he learned she learned with him; still, particularly during the last fifteen months, she had ceased to be the object of even divided attention. Mrs. Erris's whole soul seemed wound up in the young baronet. If he had been wild, and wilful, and careless of his studies, he might most likely not have continued so; for he was certain of being distinguished; and that was too surely her ambition. But though she ceased to urge forward, she had not endeavoured to hold back, and the "clever family's" influence over her was undiminished.

"Close the book, dearest brother," said Lucy, as she wiped his damp brow with her handkerchief. "Do close it; the sun has set, and you came from the library for relaxation." A gesture of impatience was her answer, and she continued by his side now smiling in return to his smile, and sometimes watching the glorious hues of the clouds—the good night of the sun to his attendant vapours.

Alfred closed his book with a heavy sigh; and leaning back on his sister's shoulder, so that he looked up into her face, he exclaimed, "There, Lucy! I have done, at least until the lamps are lit in the study. Shall we walk now? I ought to have thought of your walk before,

you who have been working with me all day ; and girls cannot work like men ! ”

Lucy smiled. “ Well, *boys*, then,” added her brother, understanding the smile. “ Boys, if you call me so. Boy as I am, Mr. Salon says I shall do myself credit at Oxford ; I will not be a mere bookworm there either, dear Lucy. I hope to be a statesman, one who will guide the future. I must, as my dear mother says, for the honour of — But, oh dear, there is that pain in my side again, as if the very idea of anything but books brought it there.” They stood up.

“ Is it better now, Alfred ? ” inquired Lucy, gazing earnestly into her brother’s face ; “ is it, dearest ? ”

“ Yes—no,” answered the boy. “ Let us walk.” In another moment they were on the terrace.

“ What a beautiful evening this is, dear Lucy ; and what a glorious world to live in ; with power, and wealth, and rank, all handmaids to do my bidding. You know we are to build the alms-houses down there ; they are to be *yours*, Lucy ; and I think I shall found a college, only I wish the *great* estate was not so far from East-in-Rest, I love this place so dearly. Ay ! there are the stars coming out one by one. When I am of age I will build an observatory on the top of the hill.”

“ What ! the squire’s hill ? ” said his sister.

“ Ah, ah, I forgot that. Do you know, Lucy,

that all this new wealth so bewilders me, that I feel as if every thing I looked on must be mine ; and oh ! if it were, would I not make a happy, happy world ? Now, dear Lucy, while I think of it, do go and ask old Charles to carry the telescope to the hill-top ; there is hardly a cloud to hide a single star, and we will spend a couple of delightful hours in computing transits and distances.” Away flew Lucy ; but ere she had gone a dozen yards, she paused and turned back.

“ Alfred, you were in the study many hours to-day ; you complain of pain in your side ; your dear hands are hot and moist, and your lips dry ; it will tire you to climb the hill-side—the dew is falling.”

“ You are unkind, Lucy,” answered the impatient boy. “ You know that those stars are to me worlds of delight. Well, I will call Charles myself.” This his sister would not permit, and in a few minutes she returned with his cloak on her arm ; as if to atone for his little pettishness, he put on the cloak immediately, and leaving the garden by a wicket-gate, they crossed the road, and ascended the hill by one of those winding paths which they had often traversed when children. The servants preceded them ; and accustomed as they were to the grace and beauty of these two children, who had grown up under their eyes, Charles, the old white-headed butler, could not avoid turning back frequently to look at them as they wound up the hill, arm

twined in arm. Lucy, like the spirit of a zephyr, so slight and wand-like, round which the soft muslin drapery floated like a cloud, yet still able to support her brother, upon whose fair brow the cool moonbeams glistened as upon an alabaster orb.

“He’s like his father,” said the old man; “like what he was, James—not in life, but on his death-bed; just so his forehead shone in the lamp-light when he’d try to read.”

“It’s seven years still till he’ll be of age,” answered the groom, who was almost as old as the butler; “but he’ll gain strength; horse exercise is the thing for him.”

“And claret,” added the butler, laying down the heavy stand of the telescope to rest a little. “Well, both; but he has a noble spirit, our young master; see now, when he looks down upon the valley, how nobly he turns his head! Sir Alfred Erris, baronet, that will sound grand when he stands for the county.”

“Ay, very grand,” replied Charles; “there is a deal in a grand sound.” And without further converse, the pair gained the plain on the top of the hill where the telescope was to be placed.

The telescope was fixed where Alfred desired; the old servants had mastered the rising ground, and made all ready for those they so dearly loved, and yet the youth and maiden, in the very spring and bound of life, had not yet reached the mossy platform.

“Dear me, Sir Alfred,” said the old coachman, “you are quite out of breath; lean on me, sir.”

“It is all the fault of this cloak that Lucy would make me wear,” exclaimed the boy, unfastening it from his gasping throat, and dashing it down; then he rushed upward, and sprang upon the mount. His triumph was short-lived: before they could say he stood there a moment, he fell flat upon the sward. It was almost as light as day, so clear was the sky, so bright the stars, and the moon shedding its clear white light over all the country. Lucy knelt, supporting his head on her bosom, and calling on him who heard her not; blood gushed freely from a wound in his temple, which a sharp pebble had inflicted. In their desire for assistance, both the old servants rushed down the hill, leaving the sister alone with her brother; he soon became conscious of her presence, complaining that he could hardly see, and that his head “turned round.”

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## CHAPTER IV.

ABOUT seven hours after this accident, which agitated the whole of East-court, Dr. Russel retired from the bed-side of the boy upon whom so

many hopes rested, and for whom so many prayers were offered: for, independent of the rich inheritance of blessing which descends from noble and righteous ancestry, Alfred was loved and honoured by all who came within the influence of his smile and the bounty of his generous hand. The good old doctor did not leave his favourite until the arrival of two eminent physicians told him it was time to do so. It was determined they should all meet in the morning, and the light gray twilight was already spreading over the horizon, yet still the kind old man lingered in his study. He was writing when a tap at the window, which opened on the lawn, arrested his attention; he unfastened it, and there was Lucy.

“Mamma would have me go to bed,” she said, “but I could not; she will not rest herself, yet she has sent me from him. I thought you could not sleep when Alfred was so ill, and I flew across the lawns, and came to you, my dear kind friend, for truth, if not for consolation. Is he very ill? Will he be better soon? Will he, my brother, will he soon recover? You turn away your head; there are tears upon your cheek, I see; I understand all that;” and she stood before the old man, whose very heart shook within him, like a statue struck dumb by his agonizing silence.

At last he succeeded in placing her in a chair; and having conquered his own emotion, by speaking to her of her brother, produced a vio-

lent burst of tears. He mentioned Alfred's youth, change of scene, mild air, and talked of care, and a total freedom from study, of rest, of there being decidedly no immediate danger ; the former words fell from his lips unnoticed ; but the saving from apprehension of *immediate* danger was what effectually recalled Lucy to herself. She fell upon her knees, and blessed her venerable friend with a burst of grateful feeling. She then became more calm, clinging to the assurance that there was "no present danger," as if there was a world of hope beyond it ; and so there was to her. The dread of losing her brother at the time was so appalling, that its terror being removed, the hope of her young heart resumed its pulsations ; and the calmness having passed away, she alarmed Dr. Russel by the energy and wildness of her manner. "How foolish we have been to fever ourselves so," she exclaimed, talking rapidly. "No immediate danger ! Oh, how I rejoice I came ! It was only that which I feared ; it is such a fearful thing to see life stopped at once. But I *knew* that could not be. Doctor, when he was bounding by my side, and then fell flat upon the grass, and I could not feel his heart beat, I thought, when I kissed his lips, there was no breath. Oh, how the heavens whirled round while I was alone with him on the hill ! But there is no *immediate* danger ; and we shall only want time, with God's blessing, doctor, to strengthen him. How we will watch him, and pray for him, and cradle him in

luxuries ; create an atmosphere for him to live in. *Now* do I rejoice more than ever at his new station and wealth ; for you know, no matter what it is, he can command *all*."

"All but the will of Heaven," observed the old doctor ; for he feared, from Lucy's flashing eyes and burning cheeks, that seemed to scorch up the tears she had shed, that her reason reeled. "All but the will of Heaven!" This short sentence supplied Lucy with a new and painful thought. "Tell me," she said eagerly, "did you ever know such as he is—mind, *such as he is*—struck down before the fulfilment of any of the glorious promises of his youth?"

The doctor paused : he knew that in his life he had never seen a youth who would bear comparison to Alfred Erris, and so he told her "he had not." This seemed to afford her great consolation ; and arguing, as those untutored spirits do, which have not been tempered by sorrow, she felt assured, at least for a time, that God would spare him.

One of the physicians, a man of such standing in his profession that he was able to tell the truth without incurring the danger of losing his practice, said, in reply to Mrs. Erris's inquiries, "The illness under which your son is now suffering may be called what we please, but it has originated in *over-mental excitement* ; the brain has been overworked, over stimulated."

The poor lady shuddered. "But it is not too

late!" she exclaimed eagerly; "oh, in mercy, do not say it is too late!"

"I hope it is not," he answered, with more feeling than was usual to him. "I trust it is not. I wish I had seen him before."

Mrs. Erris assured him that in every respect she would attend to his instructions, that she would not suffer him to study; that she would send Mr. Salon away for a time, that his books should be put far from him, that he should not think.

The physician arrested her. "You promise what you have not the power to perform," he said; "and parents, all who have influence over the education of youth, would do well to understand and to study the characters and dispositions of their children, before they submit all to the same discipline, the same excitement. The slothful—the slow, who are not slothful; the heavy-headed—the light and trifling, who have no intellectual subsoil—may be safely urged forward; and if their cheeks are pale, and grow anxious, withdraw or lighten the stimulus, and the creature becomes fat and ruddy in a week; not, perhaps, much the better for the forced exertion, though not the worse. But with the ardent, the spiritualised—those who draw inspiration from everything around them, who see and achieve; who are all eye, all ear, whose nerves and hearts do double duty, whose sharpened senses urge them forward, to stimulate them as you do the slow or the merry-minded—is sheer

madness. They have not arrived at the age when the moral power asserts its strength; they have all gifts save self-knowledge, which is the produce of years: they cannot calm themselves. You might as well tell the burning flax to quench itself. I see the insanity of this over-working young minds every day. I raise a crusade against it from the graves of those who have been so sacrificed; I"—

The physician had forgotten to whom he was speaking; but a pressure of his arm from Dr. Russel's hand recalled him. He saw that Mrs. Erris was trembling before him, her hands clasped, her lips compressed, the damp dews standing on her brow; and stern as he was, angry for that he knew, in opposition to the intreaties of those who loved that noble boy almost as well as she did, he had pity on her. She had been led away by the foolish vanity instilled into her mind by the "clever family;" she had been weak, not wicked. The physician inwardly reproved himself, and sought to console her. At present there was no danger. Use every effort, not exactly to *still* his mind, for he advised that would be impossible—but to divert it to something else: there must be an abandonment of all study, change of scene, and perfect relaxation.

In pursuance of the physician's advice, it was at length arranged that the young baronet should go to Italy. The whole neighbourhood were moved to one general prayer for his recovery; for if he died, all would pass to one of another

name, and of a depraved and dishonoured character. The venerable master of East-court begged to accompany his sorrowing friends.

“ My children always clung to you,” said the broken-hearted but grateful mother ; “ but folly grew with me, and I must bear the punishment, though, God knows, I acted for the best.” The wanderers had but one object, the restoration of this precious creature. The dismissal of Mr. Salon was a great grief to him ; but his mother consoled him by the assurance that his salary should be continued. They journeyed as the English in health or sickness love to journey. Alfred enjoyed everything he saw ; and his mother and sister had no enjoyment but in him. At first he was much better. His travelling physician, and his friendly physician, Dr. Russell, both agreed that there were strong reasons for hope ; and Lucy’s face would brighten, and her eyes fill with tears of joy, when her brother’s voice was stronger, or his step lighter, or his appetite improved. With a keen appreciation of the great and beautiful, this devoted sister saw nothing, heard nothing, but her brother. If it were possible for two creatures to have but one soul, it might have been their case. By day and night she was by his side, warding off the breeze, shading the sun, reading, or singing, or reciting ; doing everything he desired ; and thinking before one enjoyment was at an end what the next should be ; utterly careless of the sensation created by her own unearthly and trans-

parent beauty, so spiritual in its character, so elevated in its deportment, that the southerns looked upon her as a being rather to be worshipped than conversed with.

Alfred was better for a few weeks of travel, but no change had the power of restoring the tone and strength destroyed by over-mental exertion. If his mind could have slumbered, so that his body might have continued undisturbed, the youth would have achieved manhood ; but his body wasted beneath the scourge of his untiring mind. His nerves were overstrained ; he could not sleep ; he was consumed by a low wasting fever. His restlessness would have worn out any one but Lucy.

‘If,’ said the travelling physician to his friend—“if *he* endure much longer, *she* will go the first.” And yet, whether it was that the certainty Alfred always expressed as to his own recovery, or the belief Lucy hourly repeated to herself, that “God would not take him from the world,” occasioned her blindness, she did not see what her mother dared not speak of. The youth had grown much worse, and yet was telling his mother of his future plans, all tending to the advancement of others, and mingling the beautiful, the prosperous, and the good together, in an utterly unworldly way, when the master of Eastcourt entered with an open letter in his hand, his face brightened by one of his old looks of happiness. “Good news,” he said, “a letter

from Master Isaac, stating that Mr. Diggons wishes me to take Deerstone off his hands."

"They were very kind to me," said Alfred, "and yet I am glad. Oh, send them away at once! and then, mamma, let us go home. Do, mother; take me home!" This appeal was answered by a burst of tears from his mother, for, while speaking, he stretched forth his hands towards her, and the light being rather strong upon them, shone almost through them. Oh, how attenuated! They were transparent! yet firmly clasped together, while the boy again intreated, "Oh, mother, take me home!"

"How you all look!" exclaimed Lucy, twining her ready arm around his neck, and gazing in his flushed face. "Yes, dearest Alfred, there is no need for this excitement; we will go home immediately, if you like, if the doctors say you are strong enough for the journey."

"I am," he said, half rising from the sofa. "I want to be at home; that is all I want now. I have had rest and change; and now I wish to get to work again. Time is passing. I ought to be at Oxford. I want my books. If you let me have my books, I can sleep. Look how strong I am. Stand with me, Lucy, that they may see me walk. There!"

He stood for a moment by his sister's side, she still gazing in his face; and the brightness of the sunbeams, that came through the half-open window, played like a glory round their heads.

"Now, dearest mother, will you not take me

home ; home to England ?" Lucy felt the arm of her brother relax its hold ; she clasped him more closely—closer still. " Alfred !" she whispered : " Alfred !" He was on the sofa, but she still clasped him. Her lips moved, but no sound escaped them. She heard not her mother's screams, nor the more collected words of her friends. Still, Lucy gazed into those " windows of the soul ;" they were open still, but their light, their soul, was gone !

Some time passed, and though every day it was said at Nice that the English lady and suite, whose beautiful son died, as she thought, suddenly, would leave the following day, they were still there. Since her brother's death, Lucy shed no tear, spoke no word. The last sound she uttered was " Alfred." She knew no one. Move her, she did not resist. Gentle and passive, she made neither sign nor complaint ; did not return her mother's tearful caresses, nor observe when, at last, she was placed in the carriage to return home. This " living death " roused her mother ; but nothing seemed to awaken her, until, when the day after they returned to East-in-Rest, Doctor Russel took her to the pavilion in the garden, where her childhood passed so happily with her brother. She shed a few tears from this time. Her consciousness returned in some degree, though she never mentioned her brother's name. She would occasionally murmur over snatches of the poems they read together, and listen when the Bible was read to her.

She sank, however, daily—imperceptibly ; smiling, as her end drew nigh, in a sweet, unearthly way, on those around her, all gentleness and love. Once, drawing Doctor Russel's head close to her, so close, that his long white hair mingled with the rich brown tresses that wreathed her throat and shoulders, she whispered, “ I can say now, *thy* will be done !” and thus she departed.

Those who visit the sweet village of East-court now, will find it changed. The old manor-house, though still inhabited by a family of the name of Russel, are greatly respected, talk of their good uncle, whose monument has been lately placed in the church. But what chiefly attracts the eye, is the gloomy aspect of the house called East-in-Rest. Every window is closed ; sheltered up completely. And the escutcheon above the entrance has remained there so long, that it is garlanded, as if in mockery, by roses and other climbing plants, wild and untrimmed for years. The lady of the house, the people say, a childless widow, resides there, and is sometimes seen wandering amid the tangled walks, for nothing has been trimmed since her children died ; passing silently along, or, if she speaks to any, it is to some mother with children around her, and she intreats her earnestly, as if pleading for her own life, “ not to force the flower—not to force the flower prematurely.”



# THE GOVERNESS.

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## CHAPTER I.

“Of course I head my advertisement thus:—‘Wanted—a governess,’” commenced Mrs. Gresham; but before I permit her to read it, I ought to state that she had called upon her sister, Mrs. Hylier, to consult concerning this important composition, to be sent that day to the *Morning Post*—Mrs. Gresham and Mrs. Hylier being both in want of resident governesses to educate their children. A visiter was also there, a Mrs. Ryal, confessedly the “most clever woman” of the neighbourhood—an astonishing manager!—but although the ladies desired her advice, they were somewhat in dread of her sarcasm.

Mrs. Gresham had again repeated “‘Wanted—a governess,’” when an old gentleman, a Mr. Byfield, was announced. The trio of wives and mothers looked at each other, as well as to say, “What a bore!”—and then Mrs. Hylier rose gracefully from her *chaise longue*, and, smiling sweetly, extended her hand, and welcomed Mr. Byfield with exceeding warmth of manner; while Mrs. Gresham and Mrs. Ryal

declared aloud their delight at being so fortunate as to meet a neighbour they had so seldom the pleasure to see.

The party thus assembled were all inhabitants of the bustling yet courtly suburb of Kensington; and Mr. Byfield being a rich and influential, though a very eccentric man, was sure of being treated with the distinction which people of small means are too prone to bestow upon those whose means are more extensive.

“Do not let me interrupt you in the least, ladies,” said the old man, quietly taking his seat near the window. “Mr. Hylier promised I should look over these gems by daylight; and when you have talked your own talk, there will be time enough to talk mine.” The ladies, one and all, declared their conviction that his “talk” must be more pleasant and instructive than theirs. He did not deny this, but smiled—shook his head—touched his hat (which he had laid down at his feet,) as if to say he would either go or have his own way. And so Mrs. Gresham recommenced reading her advertisement—“Wanted—a governess. Any lady possessing a sound English education, a thorough knowledge of the theory and practice of instrumental and vocal music, and a perfect acquaintance with the French, Italian, and German languages; also with the rudiments of Latin.”

“Latin!” interrupted Mrs. Ryal. “Latin! why, what *do* you want with Latin for a pack of girls?”

"I thought," answered Mrs. Gresham meekly, "that as there are but three girls, Teddy might do his lessons with them for a little while, and that would save the expense of a tutor."

"Oh, very good—very good," replied Mrs. Ryal; "then add also, Greek; if the governess is any thing of a classic, you'll get both for the same money."

"Thank you, dear Mrs. Ryal; how clever you are! G-r-, there are two 'ees' in Greek?—also the rudiments of Latin and Greek."

"I beg your pardon once more," said the provokingly "clever lady;" "but put Greek and Latin, that is the correct way."

"Greek and Latin, and the principles of drawing—if her character will bear the strictest investigation, may hear of a highly respectable situation by applying to Z. P."

"Post paid," again suggested Mrs. Ryal.

"Of course," continued Mrs. Gresham; "'and as the lady will be treated as one of the family, a high salary will not be given.'

"Well," said Mrs. Ryal, "I think that will do. You have not specified writing and arithmetic."

"English education includes that, does it not?"

"Why, yes; but you have said nothing about the sciences."

"The children are so young."

"But they grow older every day."

"Indeed that is true," observed pretty Mrs. Hylier with a sigh, and a glance at the pier-glass.

"My Ellen, though only ten, looks thirteen. I

wish her papa would let her go to school; but one of his sisters imbibed some odd philosophic notions at school, so that he wont hear of it, but talks about the necessity of putting female seminaries under the superintendence of government, and I really know not what."

"I certainly," observed Mrs. Ryal, "will not take a governess into my house again to reside—they are all *exigeant*. One was imprudent enough to wish to get married, and expected to come into the drawing room when there was company of an evening. Another would have a bedroom to herself, though, I am sure, no one could object to sleep in the same room with my own maid. Another—really the world is very depraved—occasioned a painful difference between Mr. Ryal and myself; and let *that* be a warning to you, my dear friends, not to admit any pretty, quiet, sentimental young ladies into your domestic circles. Mr. Ryal is a very charming man, and a good man; but men are but men after all, and can be managed by any one who will flatter them a little. Of course, he is a man of the highest honour; but there is no necessity for having a person in the house who plays or sings better than ones-self."

"Oh, my dear Mrs. Ryal!" exclaimed both voices, "you need never fear comparison with any one." The jealous lady looked pleased, but shook her head. "Well, at last I resolved to be my own governess—with the assistance of a *young person*, who comes daily for *three*, and

sometimes I get *four*, hours out of her ; and she is very reasonable—two guineas a-month, and dines with the children. She is not *all* I could wish ; her manners are a little defective, for she is not exactly a lady ; her father is a very respectable man, keeps that large butter shop at the corner—I forget—somewhere off Piccadilly—but I prefer it, my dear ladies, I prefer it—*she does all the drudgery without grumbling*. Your officers' and clergymen's daughters, and decayed gentlewomen, why, their high-toned manners—if they never speak a word—prevent one's being quite at ease *with* them, though they are, after all, only governesses.”

“ But,” suggested Mrs. Gresham mildly, “ lady-like manners are so very necessary.”

“ Yes,” answered Mrs. Ryal, “ so they are ; for you and I”—

“ And children so easily imbibe vulgar habits, that it is really *necessary* to have a lady with them.”

“ Well,” said Mrs. Ryal, with a sneer, “ ladies are plenty enough. I daresay you will have fifty answers. What salary do you mean to give ?”

Mrs. Gresham was a timid but kind-hearted woman, one who desired to do right, but had hardly courage to combat wrong. She was incapable of treating any thing unkindly, but she would be guilty of injustice if justice gave her much trouble ; she hesitated, because she re-

quired a great deal, and intended to give very little.

“*I* cannot give more than five-and-twenty pounds a-year to any one,” said Mrs. Hylier in a decided tone. “My husband says we cannot afford to keep two men-servants and a governess; he wanted me to give the governess seventy, and discharge Thomas; but that was quite impossible; so I have made up my mind: there are only two girls. No after claps, like my sister Gresham’s little ‘*Teddy*;’ she can spend every evening in the drawing-room when we are by ourselves—have the keys of the piano and library—amuse herself with my embroidery—go to church in the carriage on Sunday—and drive at least once a-week with the children in the Park. There!” added Mrs. Hylier; “I am sure there are hundreds of accomplished women who would jump at such a situation if they knew of it.”

“Washing included?” inquired Mrs. Ryal.

“No. I think she must pay her own washing, unless there was some great inducement.”

“You allow no followers?”

“Oh, certainly not. What can a governess want of friends? Her pupils ought to have all her time.”

“God help her!” murmured the old gentleman. The murmur was so indistinct that the ladies only looked at each other, and then Mrs. Hylier said, “Did you speak, sir?” There was no answer. The conversation was resumed with

a half whisper from one lady to another, that perhaps Mr. Byfield was not deaf at all times.

“And what do *you* intend giving, Mrs. Gresham?” questioned Mrs. Ryal.

“I have three girls and a boy,” she replied; “and I thought of forty.”

“It will be impossible to prevent your governess from talking to mine, and then mine will get discontented; that is not fair, Fanny,” observed her sister; “say five-and-thirty, allowing for the difference of number.”

“And plenty, I call it,” said Mrs. Ryal. “What do they want but clothes? They never lay by for a rainy day. There are hundreds—yes, of well-born and well-bred ladies—who would be glad of such situations.”

“I am sorry for it,” said the old gentleman, rising and advancing to where the three Kensington wives were seated; I am very sorry for it.”

“Indeed, Mr. Byfield! why, we shall have the better choice.”

“Forgive me, ladies, for saying so—but still more am I grieved at that. Permit me to read your advertisement.”

Mrs. Gresham coloured; Mrs. Hylier had sufficient command over herself not to appear annoyed; but Mrs. Ryal, the oracle of a *clique*, the “clever woman,” who had, by the dint of self-esteem and effrontery, established a reputation of intellectual superiority over those who were either too indolent or too ignorant to ques-

tion her authority, evinced her displeasure by throwing herself back in her chair, loosening the tie of her bonnet, and dressing her lips in one of those supercilious smiles that would mar the beauty of an angel.

“ ‘Wanted, a governess,’ ” read the old gentleman, who frequently interrupted himself to make the following observations;—“ ‘Any lady possessing a sound English education’ —that in itself is no easy thing to attain—‘ a thorough knowledge of the theory and practice of vocal and instrumental music’ —a thorough knowledge of the theory and practice of either the one or the other requires the labour of a *man’s* life, my good ladies—‘ and a perfect acquaintance with the French, Italian, and German languages’ —how very useless and absurd to found professorships of modern languages in our new colleges, when, in addition to the musical knowledge that would create a composer, a single person, a young female, can be found possessed of a ‘*perfect* acquaintance’ with French, Italian, and German! Oh, wonderful age!—‘ also, the rudiments of Greek and Latin—may hear of a highly respectable situation by applying to Z. P., post paid, Post-Office, Kensington.’ Much as you expect in the way of acquirements and accomplishments, ladies,” continued the critic, still retaining fast hold of poor Mrs. Gresham’s composition, “ you have not demanded a great deal on the score of religion or morality—neither are mentioned in your list of requisites.”

“ Oh!” exclaimed Mrs. Hylier, “ they are taken for granted. No one would think of engaging a governess that was not moral and all that sort of thing, which are always matters of course.”

“ To be sure they are,” added Mrs. Ryal, in that peremptory tone which seemed to say, Do you dare to question my opinion? “ To be sure they are ; every one knows that nothing can be more determined with respect to religion and morality than my practice with my children. Rain, hail, or sunshine, well or ill, the governess must be in the house before the clock strikes nine. Psalms read the first thing ; and if they have not got well through the French verbs, a chapter besides *for punishment* ; catechism, Wednesdays and Fridays ; and the collect, epistle, and gospel, by heart, every Sunday after church. I always do two things at once, when I can, and this strengthens their memory, and teaches them religion at the same time ; it looks narrow-minded ; and yet *mine* never dreams of objecting to what I desire.”

“ I should think not,” was Mr. Byfield’s quiet rejoinder ; “ strange ideas your children will entertain of the religion that is rendered a punishment instead of a reward.”

Mrs. Ryal grasped the tassel of her muff, but made no reply.

“ Oh,” he continued, “ here is the pith in a postscript—‘ As the lady will be treated as one of the family, a high salary will not be given.’

Ladies!" exclaimed the old man, "do you not blush at this? You ask for the fruits of an education that, if it be half what you demand, must have cost the governess the labour of a life, and her friends many hundred pounds. It is your DUTY to treat the person who is capable of bestowing upon your children the greatest of earthly blessings as one of your family; and yet you make the doing so a reason for abridging a stipend, which, if stretched to the utmost of what governesses receive, pays a wretched interest for both time and money. Shame, ladies, shame!"

The ladies looked at each other, and at last Mrs. Hylier said, "Really, sir, I do not see it at all in the light in which you put it. I know numberless instances where they are glad to come for less."

Tears came into Mrs. Gresham's eyes, and Mrs. Ryal kicked the ottoman violently.

"The more's the pity," continued Mr. Byfield; "but I hold it to be a principle of English honesty to pay for value received, and of English honour not to take advantage of distress."

"Suppose we cannot afford it, sir—am I to do without a governess for my children because my husband cannot pay to one sixty or seventy pounds a-year?"

"But you said just now, madam, that Mr. Hylier wished you to pay that sum."

"Yes," stammered the fair economist, "if—if"—

"*If you could manage with one footman,*"

said the old gentleman, “instead of two. In my young days, my wife, who had but one child, and we were poor, said to me—‘Joseph, our girl is growing up without education, and I cannot teach, for I never learned, but we must send her to school.’ I answered that we could not afford it. ‘Oh, yes, we can,’ she said; ‘I will discharge our servant; I will curtail our expenses in every way, because I am resolved that she shall be well-educated, and honestly paid for.’ It never occurred to that right-minded yet simple-hearted woman to propose lower terms to a governess, but she proposed less indulgence to herself. Thus she rendered justice. She would have worked her fingers to the bone sooner than have bargained for intellect. Ay, Mrs. Ryal, you may laugh; but of all meannesses, the meanest is that which depreciates mind, and having no power but that which proceeds from a full purse, insults the indigence which has more of the immaterial world beneath its russet gown than your wealth can purchase.”

“My wealth!” exclaimed the offended lady; “*your* wealth, if you please; but though *your* wealth, and your oddity, and your altogether, may awe some people, it *can* have no effect upon *me*, Mr. Byfield;—none in the world; every one says you are a strange creature.”

“My dear Mrs. Ryal,” said Mrs. Hylier, “you positively must not grow angry with our dear friend, Mr. Byfield; he does not mean half what he says.”

“ I beg your pardon,” interrupted the eccentric old gentleman ; “ I mean a great deal more. I only wish I had the means of sending forth to the world my opinion as to the inestimable value of domestic education for females. I would have every woman educated within the sanctuary of her own home. I would not loosen the smallest fibre of the affection which binds her to her father’s house ; it should be at once her altar and her *throne* ; but as it is a blessing which circumstances prevent many from enjoying, I would command the legislature of this mighty country to devise some means for the better ordering and investigation of ‘ ladies’ boarding-schools.’ To set up an establishment for young ladies is very often the last resource for characterless women, and persons who, failing in every thing else, resort to that as a means of subsistence ; whereas such should be under the closest superintendence of high-minded and right-thinking gentlewomen. I look upon the blue-boarded and brass-plated schools that swarm in our suburbs,” he added, as he turned away to hide an emotion he could not control—“ I look upon them as the very charnel-houses of morality.”

Mrs. Ryal elevated her eye brows, and shrugged her shoulders, while the gentle Mrs. Graham whispered her “ not to mind ; that Mr Byfield was half mad on the subject of schools.”

“ Ladies,” said the old man, apparently recovered from his agitation, and in his usually quiet, calm, yet harshly-toned voice ; “ ladies,

you are, in different degrees, all women of the world; you live with it, and for it, and you are of it; but you are also mothers. And though *your* Ellen, Mrs. Hylier, does grow so fast as almost to overtake her mother's beauty, and you, Mrs. Ryal, stand in open defiance of vulgar contagion, because you fear a rival in a well-bred governess, and get more time out of your daily labourer than you would expect from your milliner for the same money; and you, Mrs. Gresham—but I cannot say to you more than that you all love your children—some more, some less. Still, according to your natures, you *all* love them dearly. So did I mine. My child was all the world to me. I told you what her poor mother did for her improvement—the sacrifice she made. But though we had the longing to secure for her every advantage, we had no skill as to the means of obtaining the knowledge we so desired her to possess. We placed her at a 'first-rate school,' as it was called, and thought we had done our duty; but this going from her home loosed the cords of love that bound her to us. And when a sudden stroke of good fortune converted a poor into a rich man, and we brought our child to a splendid house, we found that our daughter's morals had become corrupted through the means of her companions—an evil, the most difficult of all for a governess to prevent—and that she had imbibed moral poison with her mental food." The old gentleman became so agitated, that he could

not proceed ; and angry as the ladies had been with him a few moments before for a plain-speaking which amounted to rudeness, they could not avoid sympathising with his feelings.

“ But we are not going to send our children to a school,” suggested Mrs. Gresham.

“ I know that, madam,” he replied ; “ but I want to convince you, by comparison, of the blessings that await the power of cultivating both the intellect and the affections under your own roof, and so argue you into the necessity for paying honestly, if not liberally, the woman upon the faithful discharge of whose duties depends the *future* happiness or misery of those dear ones whom you have brought into the world. It is now twenty-two years since I saw that daughter ; I shall never see her again in this world ; I thought I had strength to tell you the story, painful as it is, but I have not. I would have done so, in the hope that I might have shown you how valuable, past all others, are the services rendered by a worthy and upright woman when entrusted with the education of youth ; but when I think of my lost child, I forget every thing else. She stands before me as I speak. My blue-eyed lovely one ! all innocence and truth—the light, and life, and love of that small four-roomed cottage ; and then she loved me truly and dearly ; and there again she is—most beautiful, but cankered at the heart, fair, and frail ! Lay your children in their graves, and ring the joy-bells over them sooner than in-

trust them to the whirling pestilence of a large school, or the care of a *cheap* governess!"

"He certainly is mad," whispered Mrs. Ryal to Mrs. Hylier, while the old gentleman, folding his hands one within the other, walked up and down the room, his thoughts evidently far away from the three wives, who were truly, as he said, "mere women of the world." And yet he was right—they all loved their children, but it was after their own fashion; Mrs. Gresham with the most tenderness—she wished them to be good and happy; Mrs. Hylier's affection was mingled with a strong desire that they might continue in a state of innocence as long as possible, and not grow too fast. Mrs. Ryal had none of that weakness; she did not care a bit whether she was considered old or young, as long as she was obeyed; so she determined her girls should have as little of what is called heart as possible, that they might be free to accept the best offers when they were made. She was continually contrasting riches and poverty. All the rich were angels, and all the poor thieves; there were no exceptions; those who married according to their parents' wishes rode in carriages, with two tall footmen behind each; those who married for love walked a-foot with draggled tails, and died in a workhouse. Of all the women in Kensington, Mr. Byfield disliked Mrs. Ryal the most, and seeing her at Mrs. Hylier's had irritated him more than he cared to confess even to himself. Mrs. Ryal entertained a corresponding

animosity towards Mr. Byfield ; she had resolved, come what would, to "sit him out ;" but she was afraid, if she remained much longer, that Miss Stack, the daily governess, whose mother was ill, might go a few minutes before her time was up, and she had more than once caught her shaking the hour-glass—so much for the honesty of one party and the consideration of the other ; she knew perfectly well that as soon as she was gone, she would be abused "by the old monster ;" for she was aware that, if he had gone, it would have given her extreme pleasure and satisfacton to abuse him. The old gentleman had not spoken for several minutes, but continued to walk up and down, pausing every now and then to look at her over his spectacles, as well as to inquire, "when do you mean to take your departure ?" Mrs. Ryal was too exalted to notice this ; but, after consideration, she rose with much dignity, shook hands with her two "dear friends," dropped a most exaggerated curtsy to Mr. Byfield, who, the moment she was out of the room, threw himself into an easy chair, and drew a lengthened inspiration, which said plainly enough, "Thank hea-ven, she is gone !"

## CHAPTER II.

“AND now, ladies,” he exclaimed, “finding that *you* want a governess, I want to recommend one—not to you, Mrs. Gresham; notwithstanding ‘little Teddy,’ she would be too happy with you. I should wish her to live with *you*, Mrs. Hylier.”

“With me, sir? Why, after the censure you have passed upon us both, I should hardly think you would recommend us a dog, much less a governess.”

“I expect you will treat your governess hardly as well as I treat my dog,” was the ungracious reply.

“Really, Mr. Byfield”—

“Psha, lady!” interrupted the strange old man; “no words about it; I have not been so long your opposite neighbour without knowing that your last governess did not sit at your table; that when you had the hot, she had the cold; that when a visiter came, she went; that she was treated as a creature belonging to an intermediate state of society, which has never been defined or illustrated—being too high for the kitchen, too low for the parlour; that she was to govern her temper towards those who never governed their tempers towards her; that she was to cultivate intellect, yet sit silent as a fool; that she was to instruct in all accomplishments,

which she must know and feel, yet never play any thing in society except quadrilles, *because* she played so well that she might eclipse the young ladies who, not being governesses, play for husbands, while she only plays for bread! My good madam, I know almost every governess who enters Kensington by sight; the daily ones by their early hours, cotton umbrellas, and the cowed, dejected air with which they raise the knocker, uncertain how to let it fall. Do I not know the musical ones by the worn out boa doubled round their throats, and the roll of new music clasped in the thinly gloved hand?—and the drawing ones—God help them—by the small portfolio, pallid cheeks, and haggard eyes? I could tell you tales of those hard-labouring classes that would make factory labour seem a toy; but you would not understand me, though you *can* understand that you want a governess, and you can also understand that I, Joseph Byfield, hope you will take one of my recommending."

The sisters looked at each other, as well as to say, "What shall we do?"

Mrs. Hylier assumed a cheerful, careless air, and replied—"Well, sir, who is your governess?"

"Who she exactly is, Mrs. Hylier, I will not tell you; and she does not know, though she imagines she does, what she is. I will tell you. She is handsome, without the consciousness of beauty—accomplished, without affectation—gentle, without being inanimate—and I should suppose patient; for she has been a teacher in a

school, as well as in what is called a *private* family ; but I want to see her patience tested."

" Is she a good musician ? "

" Better than most women."

" And a good artist ? "

" That was not in the bond ; but she does confound perspective, and distort the human body as perfectly as most teachers of ' the art that can immortalise ' " —

" My dear sir " —

" Ay, ay ; half a dozen chalk heads—a few tawdry landscapes, with the lights scratched out, and the shadows rubbed in—a bunch of flowers on velvet, and a bundle of handscreens " —

" My dear sir," interrupted Mrs. Hylier, " these sort of things would not suit my daughters ; what they do must be *artistic*."

" Then get an artist to teach them ; you go upon the principle of expecting Hertz to paint like Eastlake, and Eastlake to play like Hertz. Madam, she is a well-informed, prudent, intelligent gentlewoman ; feeling and understanding well ; consequently doing nothing ill, because she will not attempt what she cannot accomplish. She will not undertake to *finish* (that's the term, I think) pupils in either music or drawing, but she will do her best ; and as she has resided abroad, I am told (for I hate every language except my own) she is a good linguist ; and I will answer for her accepting the five-and-twenty pounds a-year."

" Very desirable, no doubt," muttered Mrs.

Hylier, unwilling for sundry reasons of great import connected with her husband, to displease Mr. Byfield, and yet most unwilling to receive into her family a person whom, judging of others by herself, she imagined must be a spy upon her *menage*.

“ I knew you would so consider any one I recommended,” said the old gentleman with a smile, that evinced the consciousness of power ; “ and when shall the ‘ *young person* ’ (that is the phrase, is it not ?) when shall she come ? ”

“ I think I should like to see her first,” answered the lady, hesitating.

“ Very good ; but to what purpose ? you know you will take her ? ”

“ Any thing to oblige you, my dear sir ; but has she no female friend ? ”

“ Some one of you ladies said a few moments ago that a governess had no need of friends.”

“ You are aware, Mr. Byfield, it is usual upon such occasions to consult the lady the governess resided with last ; it is usual ; I do not want to insist upon it, because I am sure you understand exactly what I require.”

“ Indeed, madam, I do not pretend to such extensive information ; I know, I think, what you *ought* to require, that is all. However, if you wish, you shall have references besides mine,” and Mr. Byfield looked harder and stiffer than ever. He walked up to a small water-colour drawing that hung above a little table, and contemplated it, twirling his cane about in a half

circle all the time. The subject was ugly enough to look at—a long chimney emitting a column of dense smoke like a steamer, and a slated building stuck on one side, being a view of the “Achilles saw mills,” which Mr. Hylier had lately purchased, a considerable portion of the purchase money having been advanced by Mr. Byfield.

“No matter how odd, how rude, how incomprehensible our old neighbour is, Caroline,” Mr. Hylier had said to his wife only that morning; “no matter what he does, or says, or fancies; if you contradict or annoy him, it will be my ruin.”

Her husband’s words were forcibly recalled to her by the attitude and look of the old gentleman, and she answered—“Oh, dear, no, sir, not at all; one cannot help anxiety on such a subject; and I must only endeavour to make the lady comfortable, and all that sort of thing, although I fear she may complain to you of”—

“No, no, madam,” he interrupted; “I do not desire her to be treated in any way better than your former governess; I wish to see how she bears the rubs of life; I *particularly* request that no change whatever be made in her favour; if I wished her to be quiet and comfortable, I should have sent her to my gentle little friend, Mrs. Gresham.”

Mrs. Hylier bit her lip. “Good morning, ladies; when shall Miss Dawson—her name is Emily Dawson—when shall she come?”

“When you please, sir.”

“To-morrow, then, at twelve.”

He shut the door; Mrs. Gresham rang the bell; and Mrs. Hylier, in a weak fit of uncontrollable vexation, burst into tears.

“Did you ever know such a savage?” exclaimed Mrs. Gresham.

“I am sure *you* have no reason to complain—if it was not for the hold he has over Hylier”—

“I wonder if she is any relation of his?” said Mrs. Gresham, who was a little given to romance.

“Not she, indeed; he is as proud as Lucifer, and has money enough to enable him to live in a palace.”

“Could it be possible that he intends to marry,” suggested Mrs. Gresham.

“Marry, indeed; would any man that could prevent it, permit the woman he intended to marry to be a governess? No. I’ll trouble my head no more about it; let her come; one is pretty much the same as another; the only thing that really gives me pain is, that Mrs. Ryal should have heard so much about it; she’s a regular bell-woman; likes to have the earliest information of whatever goes on in the world, so as to be the first to set it going. She was the means of the dismissal of five governesses only last winter, and there is no end to the matches of her breaking. She will declare the girl is—God knows what—if she finds all out.”

“Well,” said Mrs. Gresham, musingly, “after all, it is very odd; only fancy Mr. Byfield taking

an interest in a governess *at all*. Still, I must insert my advertisement, and I think I might substitute dancing for Greek ; they are about equally useful, and one must not be too unreasonable."

"Very considerate and good of you, Fanny," said her sister ; "but believe me, the more you require the more you will get ; and I am not sure that Mrs. Ryal was wrong about the sciences ; every day something fresh starts up that no one ever heard of before, and one must be able to talk about it ; it is really very fatiguing to keep up with all the new things, and somehow I do not think the credit one gets by the knowledge is half enough to repay one for the labour."

"Mr. Gresham says the whole system, or, as *he* calls it, *no* system, of female education is wrong."

"My dear Fanny, how absurd you are !—What can men possibly know of female education ? There is my husband, a worthy man as ever lived, and yet he will tell you that the whole object of female education should be to make women—now only imagine what?"

"I am sure I do not know."

"Why, good wives and mothers."

"Both ladies laughed, and then Mrs. Hylier exclaimed, "to think of my taking any one into my house under such circumstances ! But at all events, I must prepare the children for their new governess !"

## CHAPTER III.

EMILY DAWSON had been nearly four months in her situation; during that time Mr. Byfield came and went, at Mr. Hylier's, as usual; if he met his protegee on the stairs, he turned his head another way; he never asked a question about her, nor seemed to take the least interest in her proceedings; once or twice Mrs. Hylier (who prided herself on her diplomacy) said something leading to the subject, but Mr. Byfield silenced her in a way peculiarly his own.

"Why does Mr. Byfield turn away from you, Miss Dawson?" inquired little Elizabeth Hylier. (Children are acute observers.) "He used to stop us on the stairs, and call us juvenile jades; now he looks so—and goes on. Have you been a naughty girl, dear Miss Dawson?"

"I hope not, Elizabeth," said the governess.

"I am sure not," added Caroline, the elder of the two; "I don't think you were ever naughty. When you were a little girl, you were always too steady—too serious—and"—The young lady paused, and looked earnestly in her governess's face.

"Well, my dear, go on," said Miss Dawson, in her gentle voice.

"I would rather not say what I intended, for fear you would not like it," answered the girl; "and yet I should wish to say it."

“Then do, Caroline.”

“I meant too sad to be naughty, or like other girls.”

“I was not always sad, my dear; though, I perceive, I must not let you see that I am so, even at times. If you say your lessons as well, and are as attentive as you have been this morning, I shall be much happier.” Caroline Hylier flung her arms round Miss Dawson’s neck, and kissed her, declaring that since such was the case, she would certainly do her best to improve; and while she was speaking, Mrs. Hylier entered the school-room—a cloud of the deepest displeasure overshadowed her pretty face.

“Oh, mamma!” exclaimed Elizabeth, “Miss Dawson says that if we are good, she will be so much happier.”

“I should have thought,” observed the jealous mother, “that *my* being happier was of more consequence; is it not, Miss Dawson?”

“Certainly, ma’am,” she replied.

“I *do* wish, Miss Dawson, you would not answer me in that peculiarly sad voice; and that everlasting mourning you wear—it makes me heart-broken to look at it.”

“It nearly broke mine,” said the poor girl, “to put it on.”

“Well, there is no occasion to be sharp about it. I thought when you received your first quarter’s salary, you would have changed it. Caroline, take your hand out of Miss Dawson’s; I hate to see that sort of familiarity. Since you

have both been so good, suppose you come and drive with me in the park."

"Oh, thank you, dear mamma!" exclaimed both the children, in the same delighted tone of voice, and rejoiced to see her temper changed.

"Thank you, that will be a treat; and, mamma," added Caroline, "may Miss Dawson come also?"

"Miss Dawson has had her drive this week already," said Mrs. Hylier, walking out of the room with renewed ill temper.

"Let Elizabeth go, and I will stay with you," whispered the affectionate though spoiled child to Miss Dawson.

"No, indeed," she replied—"no, indeed; it was very kind of your mamma to ask you, and you will offend her if you do not go. I have a letter to write, and that will employ me until you return."

"Ah, you say that to make us go!" said Elizabeth.

"For shame, Lizzy! you know we never found Miss Dawson out in the very least little white fib in the world," observed Caroline.

"But that would not be a fib, would it, sister?—because mamma often says those kind of things to papa, to get him to do what she wants."

"You are too young, my dear Lizzy, to be able to judge of any one's motives," said Miss Dawson; "and in this instance must be mistaken. So now, dears, go, and do not keep mamma waiting."

Some persons, who had seen Miss Dawson by chance at Mrs. Hylier's, although she was "only a governess," had been heard to observe that she was very pretty. Had she not been a governess, she could not have been looked at without being admired—not for actual beauty, but for the sweet gentleness of her countenance, the purity of her complexion, the open, truthful, outlooking of her fine eyes, and the ease and grace of her movements. The deep mourning, which had excited Mrs. Hylier's displeasure, made her an object of touching interest to all who had any feeling; it harmonised with the sad expression of her face; and two or three ladies, in open defiance of Mrs. Hylier's well-known jealousy of disposition, had said, "how glad they would be if Miss Dawson would visit *their* young people"—invitations which she thankfully declined. When she was left alone—that luxury which her class so seldom enjoy—she opened her desk, and, after glancing over some letters, fixed her eyes upon a miniature which she had taken from a secret drawer. She looked at it long and steadily, until her eyes overflowed, and tear after tear, large round drops, coursed each other down her anguished face. She then wiped the salt moisture from its surface, looked again at the picture, pressed it convulsively within her clasped palms, and laying her head upon them, sobbed as if her heart was breaking. While sobbing, she slid from her seat upon her knees; her emotion gradually subsided. She prayed, rose, kissed the cherished

picture, and murmuring, as she closed the case, “Mother—*my* mother!” replaced it in her desk. Strange as it may seem, after this agitation she became at once composed—it had done her good—the petty insults which, cherished child as she had been for so many years, she felt it hard to endure, had passed away with the deluge of tears that welled up from her young heart. She wondered how they could have grieved her—how she could have felt them—when the superior bitterness of her mother’s loss came again upon her. Small sorrows place us below the world—a great sorrow above it; and she continued a letter, written at intervals, with a quieter and firmer mind than she had felt for some days. The letter was to a young lady, the sister of the curate who had attended her mother’s deathbed; a portion of it ran thus:—“ You ask me if I am happy: I ought to be happier than I am. My two pupils are kind, affectionate girls; and, though somewhat idle, and very ignorant, if I am permitted to manage them as I desire, I have no doubt they will improve—not rapidly, but certainly. I never could manage a child until I obtained its affections—and the affections of the young are generally ductile; but Mrs. Hylier is weak enough to be jealous of the little love the children bear me. She does not understand that it is the only means I have of working out her, or what ought to be her, intention; but the truth is, that all she really desires them to know are a few showy accomplishments. She came home

in an ecstasy of delight the other evening with a girl who repeated some long Italian poem—of which she could not even remember the name, much less understand the meaning—in a room crowded with company. ‘The girl,’ she said, ‘had so much self-possession, and her action was so graceful.’

“With the same breath she declaimed against a woman’s appearing on the stage. I ventured to observe, that the child who, at twelve years of age, would have sufficient confidence to *repeat* and *act* a poem in a crowded drawing-room, would be very likely to desire to exhibit before a larger audience as she grew older; but she could not perceive the analogy, and thought, indeed *said*, I was impertinent for making it. Is it not a cause of great regret that I have never yet found a mother who would act in concert with me? I submit quietly to be treated with indifference by the lady and gentleman, who, when I am in the room, speak and act exactly as if they were alone, except when secrets are to be talked, when they begin to whisper, and then, of course, I leave the apartment. I find, when with my pupils, a deep, and happily an absorbing interest, in their improvement; but, when that excitement is over, I droop again; for I am considered an intruder when lessons are over, and an automaton while they are in progress. Shall I ever again hear the voice of encouragement, which makes the heart bound to its duties—*shall I ever be praised any more?* Oh, do not

think, because I say this, that I yearn after flattery ; I do not ; but if the parent knew how kind considerate words increase the desire to bring the children forward—a smile—a gentle word—a simple ‘you have done well,’ would make the labour, the weary labour, of thankless teaching a pleasure. Mrs. Hylier seldom finds fault ; but she never utters a sound of commendation. And yet, why do I complain ? You know that, for three years before my mother was taken from me, I toiled through the streets of that distant town, in the grey mists of the winter’s mornings, as in the light of the summer’s sun, teaching music here and drawing there—all the accomplishments in one place, and ‘the sciences’ in another ; and as I had no protector—a creature to be insulted by those whose manly garb was certainly no index to a manly mind—I was dismissed from one house because the lady thought me too pretty to come in the way of her son ; from another, because I did not wear caps, and looked too young without them ; from another, because I would not lunch with the lady’s maid ; and yet I bore all this, and more, as you know, cheerfully, because from six in the evening until eight the next morning, I had the sheltering bosom of my mother. The abilities she had fostered were the means of supporting her at the last. In those two small cottage rooms *I had a home* ; there was *her* smile, *her* voice, *her* counsel, and *her* prayer. I was some one’s first object. She

loved me; the tenderness of her whole life was poured into my heart, under every trial which a fatherless girl must endure, who has to grope her way through the world's darkness. Oh, my mother! my mother!—but tears will blot the page when I write of her! When I think of her, I feel suffocated; and I have no right to repine; only thus much—even a little kindness would make me work so cheerfully. With the education, and tastes, and feelings of a gentlewoman, it is hard to be treated as if I had neither education, nor taste, nor feeling. The lady's maid is a confidant; the housekeeper a mistress; the housemaid has half the day to herself; the governess—But this is idle; my mother would reprove me for it; she would tell me to do my duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call me, and leave the rest to Him. You know how she was deserted by her father in consequence of her marriage; and, according to her desire, her death was mentioned exactly as she wished. She thought that if her father saw it, he would seek out his grandchild. Perhaps he is dead!—at least no notice has been taken of me; and if it had not been for the chance which threw me in the way of that strange old man, Mr. Byfield, I might have been left upon the world without any occupation. He is certainly a very odd old man; he evinced a great degree of interest in me at first, but since he placed me here, has never spoken to me but once. I had been walking the other morning

in the park for more than two hours with the children, and being tired, sat down upon one of the benches, while my children walked up and down with their cousin, as their mother wishes, and under the care of Mrs. Gresham's French governess; he came so suddenly, that he quite took me by surprise. 'Are you growing lazy?' he inquired. I answered, No; but that I was not very well. 'And have you not found out,' he continued, 'that a governess has no right to be ill?' I answered, 'I knew that; and so was ill but seldom.' 'Do you jest with me?' he said, sternly. 'No, sir,' I replied; 'I speak the truth. If I were independent, I would yield most likely to a pain in my side, or, when my cough keeps me awake all night, send for a doctor. The world believes in the sickness that is heard of, rather than the sickness that must be examined into. No one sees my illness, so I am ill but seldom.' And then he looked so penetratingly into my face, and asked me how I had learned to reason? and I had it on my lip to answer, that I learned to reason by endeavouring to cease to feel, but thought the reply would seem pert from youth to age, so smiled, and held my peace; and when I smiled, he sighed so bitterly, and walked away, and then looked back, and returned and sat down by my side; then gazing in my face, he asked me if I had ever told a lie. And I said truly, in the sight of God, I believed I never had since I knew wrong from right. And then he answered, that I looked

like truth, as all women did when they lied most. It was unwise, I know; but I had done nothing to deserve such an insult, and I told him so, without further parley, but as gently as I could, thanking him for the kindness he had shown to one who had no friend but God. Will you believe that he seemed no more moved by what I uttered in any one way, than if I had been dumb; only, when I had finished speaking, I could not repress the tears that would come—poor cowardly tears—I hate them so—those waters of a troubled heart; and then, shaking his head, he said—But I hear the voice of Mrs. Gresham's French governess, so must say adieu for the present. If constant occupation did not increase my weakness, I daresay my spirits would revive; for I have a better lot than many. There is a poor teacher at Mrs. Stonewell's school, and Ma'amselle Mercier tells me she has but fifteen pounds a-year, and remains at school all the vacations, to mend up the house linen. Adieu.”

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#### CHAPTER IV.

“Ah! there you are!” exclaimed the light breezy voice of Mademoiselle Mercier, as she ran up and kissed Emily Dawson on both

cheeks. “Ah! mamie, why you not go a valk in the Parks? Ah! you English ladies are given to the mopes; and ven you have five moments to yourselves, instead of enjoy all, you make sorrow more sorrowful by thinking over him! Tonjours gai! I have seen my maman this morning—she come from Paris to be bonne in Lady Craig’s family, after educating Lady Craig. She has brought me such a charming parasol; she loves me so moche, my dear mothere! Ah! my dear, I beg your pardon, I forget; I did not mean to call your tears, chere Emily. I am thoughtless girl; and my mothere make me full of joy. Now, do not cry; bah!—there! I tell you, if you dry up your nice blue English eyes, I vill go and fetch my new parasol, and ve vill valk togethere in Kensington Garden for half hour. Madame Hylier, she say to Madame Gresham, they go three hours’ drive, and they are not gone two hours yet. Do come. Madame Gresham likes me to be with you, you are so steady. All the company is in the garden by this time—and ve see such nice ladie and gentleman, almost like Longchamps.”

Miss Dawson begged to be excused; she would rather stay at home; she had much to do; was not well; and urged a thousand reasons, but without effect. “As you please, my dear,” said the now pouting French girl; “but it is unkind of you. Madame Gresham vill not let me go with any other lady, and I nevere get a valk. Dat cher littel boy is such a plague ven ve go out

—and he is avay. Now, do come; it is cruel of you for fancy to prevent me!” Emily did not continue to refuse, for she could not bear to be unkind; and drawing a thick crape veil over her face, she prepared to accompany the volatile but kind-hearted Frenchwoman. They were a national contrast those two girls;—the staid, quiet, graceful deportment of Emily Dawson, and the vivid, tripping, carefully careless *démarche* of Colette Mercier—the deep mourning of the English girl, and the tulip-like appearance of the French, in whose dress, though there were divers colours, there was perfect harmony. “ You look pale and tired already, mamie,” she said to Emily; “ and we must not sit down in the gardens, I am told. But it would be most pleasant, those charming, lovely ladies, and handsome gentlemen, if they only vould look happy; but they do not—they look solemn, and valk dead marché in Saul; and yet, though I am but poor governess, I am happier than they. There, now, is an English governess with her pupils—how sad she look, poor girl! I vill tell you, Emily, vat my mothere tell me ven first I come to Englan’. ‘ Ma chere,’ she say to me in confidance, ‘ do your duty as moche as you can, *without killing yourself*. Some families vill be *very kind* and goot to you; and out out of seven that I taught in myself, one is good to me now, that is Lady Craig; but the rest forget the care and teachings. If you meet gratitude—which all who teach deserve from all who learn—turn up your eyes and bless

God, but *do not expect it*. I know what young teachers think ven pains have been taken with them, as I take with you ; they go to a situation full of the importance of their *duties*. Bah ! till motheres treat governesses like gentlewomen, and feel that the very best part of what an honest teacher gives her pupils—the thoughts of her head and the feelings of her heart—cannot be paid for, though the machinery of teaching may, there can be no reciprocity of interest between them.””

This Colette uttered rapidly, with her strong and peculiar accent, for her French had a flavouring of patois, of which even her English partook ; and she laughed lightly when her speech was ended. “That,” answered Miss Dawson, “is an easy theory, but a bad practice. No matter how you are treated your duty remains the same ; it cannot be performed with the same pleasure, but *it is the same !*””

“Vell, my dear, so let it be ; torment the flesh off your bones—plague yourself to death—fag, fag—and see ! At the last you vill have no more thanks for *your* heavy toil than I shall have for my light labour. Bah ! half the people do not know the difference between a good and bad governess. My mothere, she say, how should they, until they are better educated themselves ? Now, there, you act what you call conscientiously ; you are thin, like a poor rush, and sigh when alone. I take it lightly ; I do not trouble myself ; I am

fat, and laugh to myself. If you wear yourself to the bone, what do you satisfy?"

" My own conscience," replied Emily.

" Ah, well, if you go on satisfying your sort of conscience, you will soon have a bell ring over your grave," replied the French girl. " Ah!" she added, looking under her companion's bonnet—for they had been walking rather rapidly, and Emily was obliged to throw up her veil for air—"you smile at that; it is not smiling matter to die, and be put in the cold ground when one is young, and the earth one great garden." Emily made no reply. " After all," resumed Colette, " I do not see so pretty parasol as mine with any lady."

" It is very pretty, certainly," replied Miss Dawson; " but I think it quite time to return home." She was urged to this remark by the stare of a couple of gentlemen, who, certainly not unobserved by Colette, had followed them for the last few minutes, and, despite their rapid footsteps, managed to escort them, as soldiers do their prisoners, to their own door—Emily maintaining a dignified silence, and Colette divided between her national love for adventure and a certain womanly disdain of insulting impertinence, which together—one feeling acting one moment and another the next—prompted her to give vent to one or two clever sarcasms, which provoked and amused their tormentors.

Mrs. Hylier and Mrs. Gresham were at the

breakfast-room door as they entered, evidently watching their return.

"I did not know you were going out, Miss Dawson," said Mrs. Hylier, sternly,

"As the young ladies were with you, I thought I might accompany Ma'amselle," she answered.

"I do not approve of my governess walking with gentlemen," continued the lady, apparently unconscious that Miss Dawson had replied.

"Vat gentlemans?" exclaimed Miss Mercier, with an air of pretty astonishment.

"You know best, miss; but as you are not in my employment, I have nothing to say to you; I can only desire *my governess* not to do it again," persisted Mrs. Hylier. "And I should like to know who the gentlemen were."

"And so should I, indeed, ma'am," said Miss Dawson, "most earnestly, though it would be to little purpose—for who would revenge an insult offered to me?"

"Oh you should tell your patron saint Mr. Byfield," returned the lady, with an insulting laugh and a sneer, as she entered the breakfast-room with Mrs. Gresham, and slapped the door in the face of the two girls.

While Colette muttered to herself in French, Miss Dawson turned slowly round to go up stairs, and saw the housemaid draw back her head from over the bannisters, while the footman did not think it necessary to conceal that he had heard the "blowing up," as *he* elegantly termed it, which his mistress "gave our governess."

Mrs. Hylier threw herself into a chair, and, looking at Mrs. Gresham, exclaimed, "Well, and what do you mean to do?"

"Why, nothing, sister; surely the poor girls cannot help it if impertinent men will follow them home."

"I know very well that French girl you have is good for nothing, and you have suffered her to encroach too much."

"I really cannot tell, sister," said the tranquil Mrs. Gresham; "I had an excellent character with her, and though Mrs. Ryal did say her accent is bad, I don't think she is a good judge; and one may go on changing for ever, just as she does, since that underbred daily governess of hers ran off with her own father's shopman. She has tried half-a-dozen; but, as Mr. Gresham says, she gives her servants better wages than her teachers, and what can she expect?"

Again the ladies were interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Ryal, just as they had been when about to advertise.

"I felt it *my* duty, Mrs. Hylier," she commenced, after the usual nothings of a morning visit had been exchanged—"I felt it a positive duty to tell you that all the people of Kensington are talking about you."

"I am glad they are so well employed," retorted Mrs. Hylier with a provoking smile.

"Then you are easily satisfied, my dear; but rather I should have said, they are talking about your governess and your amazing gullibility. Indeed,

they are hinting that Mr. Hylier must have some particular reason for suffering such an inmate. Why—do—you—know—*who*—you—have—got—in—your—house?" These last words were pronounced with peculiar emphasis, and divided exactly as they are printed, the lady advancing her face close to Mrs. Hylier's, and opening her eyelids so as to make her round eyes seem half as large again as they really were.

"Ye—s," stammered Mrs. Hylier; "a go—verness."

"A—nonsense, my dear; she is not a bit better than she should be."

"Few of us are," said the meek Mrs. Gresham, who, somehow or other—perhaps through the influence of a sensible husband, whom she was fortunate enough to love very much—was beginning to think occasionally, and to compare, which is the result of thought.

Mrs. Ryal looked daggers at her for a moment, and then continued—"That old Byfield is a wretch."

"I always thought so," answered Mrs. Hylier, not willing to be outdone in suspicion; "I always thought she was his daughter."

"His daughter! that would be milk-white innocence to the fact—she is much worse."

"Impossible!" said Mrs. Gresham.

"He could not be so bad as that," observed Mrs. Hylier.

"All men are bad," pronounced the decided

Mrs. Ryal; “all men are bad, as I tell my husband; but some are worse than others.”

“You are mistaken—misinformed, I should have said,” quoth the perplexed Mrs. Hylier; “he has never taken the smallest notice of her since she has been here—never asked why she was not in the drawing-room. I even one day, thinking to put him in good humour, showed him a tulip she had worked in that everlasting tapestry of mine.”

“Well, and what did he say?”

“Why, he called it—‘Rubbish.’”

“Sheer art,” said Mrs. Ryal.

“I cannot believe he would put a person of bad character over my children,” urged Mrs. Hylier.

“Stuff!” exclaimed Mrs. Ryal.

“And the object?”

“Ah! that rests in the secret recesses of the man’s own wicked heart,” said Mrs. Ryal, with due emphasis; and then added, “To get at their motives it is hard for us poor women; but the only way to get even at their acts, is by putting that and that together.” This was said with an air of peculiar sagacity. “Now, let Mrs. Gresham ask her popinjay of a governess, if, the other day in the park, Miss Dawson did not complain of being tired—now only fancy a governess, whose duty it is, *her positive duty*, to walk as long with her pupils as it is necessary they should walk—only fancy her being tired!—ah! ah! there is a *ruse* in the very excuse—if she did not sit down on a seat, and if Mr. Byfield, who seems so

strange and unconcerned about her here, did not come up, and not only sit down by her side, but take her hand ; and then she sulked, and he went away, and came back again, and kept her hand in his, and there they sat like two lovers, in Hyde Park. It is really scandalous to repeat, and makes my cheeks all over in a glow. And to-day, my Mary was in Kensington Gardens—Mary, my own maid—and she saw your two governesses, ladies, flirting and philandering about ; and then who should she also observe, watching the English girl's every movement, but old Byfield. Well, two dandified gentlemen came up, attracted, Mary says, by the lightness of their manner, and followed them home ; but not unobserved ; for the old gentleman, his face purple with jealousy ”—

“ Or the March wind,” suggested Mrs. Gresham.

“ Kept at the other side of the way,” continued Mrs. Ryal, with a look of contempt at Mrs. Gresham. “ But that is not all. This morning I sent Mary with a letter to the post, and she overtook Mr. Byfield’s man, who was talking at the corner of Salter’s to one of the butchers. ‘ Are you going to the post-office ? ’ he said. ‘ Then will you put my master’s letter in for me ? ’ And so she took the letters—she is very obliging—and who should it be directed to but Miss Dawson ! ” Mrs. Hylier rang the bell, and inquired of the servant if the governess had received a letter. The man said the three o’clock post had

brought her one while she was out ; that he believed it had not yet been taken to the school-room ; as it was not in his department, could not exactly tell—would inquire—went down and returned with the letter : it had been left on the kitchen dresser. The lady found no fault with the servant's unpardonable inattention ; and when he had left the room, all declared that it certainly was Mr. Byfield's handwriting.

“ Will you break the seal ? ” inquired Mrs. Ryal, eyeing the letter longingly.

“ Certainly not,” answered Mrs. Hylier.

“ Ah ! ” said Mrs. Ryal, with a sigh, “ Mary says true enough, secrets *are* secrets since the packet envelopes came in ; then have her down, and see how she will look when she opens it.” Mrs. Hylier’s hand was on the bell, when Mrs Gresham interposed.

“ Sister,” she said, “ it occurs to me that we may all be in error ; and if so, how will you forgive yourself for wounding the feelings of the poor girl ? ”

“ Feelings, indeed ! ” sneered Mrs. Ryal ; “ why, I vow she has bewitched you as well as the men ; can any thing be more evident ? —at least, if she is innocent, give her an opportunity of clearing herself.”

The bell was rung ; and the governess, still smarting under the lash of the previous insult, was sent for.

The servant returned with an apology—would Mrs. Hylier be so good as to excuse her for a few

moments ; the servant added, that Miss Dawson was crying.

“ How I have sustained my spirits since she came into the house is extraordinary,” observed Mrs. Hylier, smelling her vinaigrette—she is always sad.”

“ She has good reason, you may depend on it,” said Mrs. Ryal significantly.

“ I think so too,” added Mrs. Gresham, quietly.

“ Really, sister,” said Mrs. Hylier, “ to hear you talk of late, one would think I was a savage. I am sure it is quite enough to be plagued with great growing-up daughters, without those governesses ; and if I mention school, Mr. Hylier begins about morals. I wish you had had Miss Dawson, with all my heart.”

“ My French girl does pretty well ; but Mr. Gresham says she acts from habit, not principle ; and that—but hush ”——Emily Dawson entered the room, while the traces of tears were yet fresh upon her fair young face ; the earnest desire she had ever felt to perform her duty in the highest and most important vocation which a woman can be called upon to fulfil, had not only given an elevation to her countenance and manner, but an expression to her features which never accompanies a small or sordid mind ; and whatever Mrs. Hylier chose to say when she was not present, the superiority of mind was so manifest in the manner of the young governess, that, despite the presence of Mrs. Ryal, she desired her to be seated, in a tone which signified

a request. Then came the question, Had she met Mr Byfield in the Park—sat and conversed with him. To this she frankly answered “Yes,” and seemed perfectly unconscious of the occasion of the smile and sneer that passed between Mrs. Hylier and Mrs. Ryal. She professed herself quite unable to account either for the countenance Mr. Byfield had shown her at first, or his subsequent inequality of conduct. “He had,” she said, “apparently befriended her for the very reason which made the world shun her—because she was friendless and poor.” Then Mrs. Hylier placed the letter in her hand, and with what Mrs. Ryal afterwards termed “unpardonable effrontery,” she opened it, and as she read, her countenance became radiant with pleasure.

“Well!” exclaimed the two ladies, actuated by the same impulse—“Well, have you any objection to our seeing that letter?”

“I cannot show it to Mrs. Hylier,” she replied, with perfect frankness, “because Mr. Byfield desires me not to do so.”

“Was ever such hardened impudence!” muttered Mrs. Ryal.

“It is very kind—very—I am sure,” continued Emily, reperusing the letter, and too much absorbed with and delighted by its contents to hear the remark Mrs. Ryal made. “It is too—too much!”

“What is?” said Mrs. Gresham.

“To take a lodging for me at Hampstead, where I am to remain for several months, until

I get stronger and better—and all at his own expense. I remember when I would have been too proud to accept such a favour, thinking I could earn all I required; but of late I have been so weak—so" — She looked from the gentle face of Mrs. Gresham to the other ladies, and, astonished at the expression of displeasure and scorn on their countenances, she paused, and did not utter another word.

"I think, then, the sooner you leave my house the better," said Mrs. Hylier—"the sooner the better. Oh, what will Mr. Hylier say!"

"What have I done?" exclaimed Miss Dawson.

"Oh, what a world it is—to see such a face as that masking so much vice!" ejaculated Mrs. Ryal.

"Are you aware what will be said if you place yourself under Mr. Byfield's protection in this way?" inquired Mrs. Gresham, still kindly.

"Let her go, by all means—there, you may go—and the sooner out of the house the better! Oh! to think of my having such a person as that to take care of my innocent children!" and Mrs. Hylier, overpowered by a sudden fit of maternal love, fell into strong hysterics—tears are too weak testimonies of grief for ladies of feeling.

Emily walked up stairs, the open letter in her hand. Miss Mercier was still in the school-room.

"Ma'amselle," said Miss Dawson, "Mr. Byfield has written to me that, knowing I am over-worked and ill, he has taken for me a country lodging for a few months. You know who he is, and all about him?"

"And surely you are not going to accept that!" replied the French girl; "if you do, you lose character at once. No one ever do such a naughty thing as that; he must be bad man. Do, pray, send it back; young men sometimes make love for love, but old men always for vick-edness; bah!"

Of all the difficult things in the world, it is the most difficult for people of the world to comprehend the unselfishness of the good.

"I don't know how it is," persisted Ma'amselle; "you are in life nearly as long as I am, and yet you don't know half so muche. Depend upon it, the old man is a bad man. If you go into the lodging he take, you nevere come out with a good character. Take my advice—I know more than you."

"Good-bye, Ma'amselle," said Emily; "thank you for your frankness. God bless you; leave me by myself to think a little."

When Emily was alone, she read the letter over again. The unaccountable interest Mr. Byfield had taken in her as a stranger, did not seem so strange as the carelessness he had evinced towards her for so long a time. Emily Dawson's own pure mind could hardly conceive the possibility of what she had heard from Mrs.

Hylier and Mrs. Ryal; but she had often been astonished at the acuteness of the French-woman's perceptions. Could such baseness be possible? Her whole nature seemed changed in a moment; she trembled convulsively, fearing she knew not what; and, from suspecting nothing, she suspected every thing. Why should Mr. Byfield forbid her mentioning the subject of his letter to Mrs. Hylier?—why? But her brain whirled—she could not think. The house-maid entered the room; she was a kind girl, and in tears.

“Please, miss, my mistress says you're to go to-night,” she said.

“Where?” inquired the governess, in a tone of such utter helplessness that it touched the poor thing to the heart.

“I'm sure I don't know, miss. She said you could be at no loss for a home; and here's the month's salary and month's warning money.”

“Not to Mr. Byfield,” she thought; “I must not go there; they all say that; and yet this woman turns me out to the very vice she would have me shun. God help me—I am quite, quite alone!”

“Master will be in a fine way, *that I* know, when he comes home,” continued the girl, good-naturedly busying herself packing up Miss Dawson's wardrobe. “I'm sure I hope you ain't going to Mr. Byfield's; though I'm sure there's no harm, yet I hope you're not, miss. If you wouldn't be above it, my mother has a little

pretty house at Chelsea, and you might be there till you could turn yourself about—safe, as one may say; and if so be you wish, I'd be on my honour and my oath not to tell—not the old gentleman, or any one else."

"Any where, Mary—any where," said the governess, listlessly; "any where, away from all I have seen in this house."

Elizabeth, the youngest of her pupils, rushed into the room, and flinging her arms round her neck, sobbed—

"You shall not go, dear Miss Dawson—you *shall* not go. Mamma said I was not to come near you, you were so wicked; but I said I would."

"Your mamma mistakes," answered the governess, not even in the anguish of that hour forgetting how necessary it is to make the parent appear right always, at least in intention, in the eyes of the child. "She mistakes, dearest Elizabeth; she will not always think so; but you must not cling round me. God bless you, my dear child; you did wrong to come when mamma said you were not to do so. God bless you—be good, be truthful, and obedient; God bless you!" and with a gentle force she obliged the weeping child to leave the room.

A short time completed her preparations, or rather the preparations which Mary made for her. It is pleasant and cheering, and one of the brightest pages in the great book of human nature, to see the kindness which the poor

bestow upon those who are in trouble. The evidence of the existence of this benevolent feeling is far more frequent than people imagine. It does not descend in showers of coin, but in words of kindness; and is as pure as the dew which an all-wise nature distils into the cups of drooping flowers.

“ Let me tie your bonnet, miss, and pin your shawl. Lawk, how *numb* your hands are! Then, you’ll go to my mother’s, I think you said, miss, and no one shall know; she’ll treat you as it becomes *her like* to treat a lady, rich or poor. Now, keep a good heart Miss Dawson; God is above us all. I’ll open the door myself,” she continued; “ and the trunk is in; and keep up, miss—lies are found out sooner or later. Why,” she exclaimed, seeing that Emily paused opposite the drawing-room, “ surely you are not going to be more insulted? You might as well talk to a stone wall as to my missus.”

Emily nevertheless entered the apartment, where Mrs. Hylier was alone, pondering over, in no pleasant mood, the occurrences of the past hours—thinking how she had acted in decided opposition to her husband’s desire, who willed it that Mr. Byfield was never to be contradicted, at least in his house; and though she was half-convinced of Emily’s unworthiness, she knew how hard it would be to convince him. The pale shrouded girl walked silently up to where Mrs. Hylier was seated. “ I come,” she said, “ to bid you remember what I say—that

you will (heartless as you are) shed tears before long for the injustice and insult you have heaped upon the head of a houseless, homeless orphan. You have done me cruel wrong by your suspicion, and you send me forth to make the suspicion real; but the God who is above all will save me yet!"

She spoke these few words in the tone of a breaking heart, and without further words she quitted the house. During the short time of her residence there, she had conferred more lasting service upon Mrs. Hylier's children than they had ever received before—she had sown healthful and truthful seed. Not content with the teaching by lessons, she had hallowed every tree, and leaf, and blade of grass, with a history. She placed a few brilliant and beautiful shells in their way, and then, without dull or dry detail, she interested them in the desire for knowledge as to where they came from and to what class they belonged. The music lesson was made of historic value by the record, if the task had been attended to, of its author, and an anecdote that bore upon its composition. The analyzation of a flower became a botanical lesson without its pedantry; and every thing she had touched upon in science and art—two words which her pupils had imbibed a hatred for, from lengthy catechisms and dry details—were illuminated at once by her simple and happy method of conveying instruction. A new existence dawned upon their minds: they understood

*why* their hoop rolled, and *why* it came to the ground ; they understood why morning followed night, and why the heat was at noon the most intense. They had learned more *orally* than they ever learned from books. Poor Emily knew this ; and as her arm encircled her trunk, and her hot fevered breath hung upon the closed windows of the rattling cab, which was taking her she knew not where, the words of the French teacher rang in her ears—“ Torment the flesh off your bones—plague yourself to death—fag, fag—and see ! At the last you will have no more thanks for your heavy toil than I shall have for my light labour.” “ Still,” she murmured, “ I have done my duty.”

“ Please ma’am,” said the man to an elderly woman who opened the door of a small house, “ here’s a lady, like, your daughter in Kensington has sent you, as a lodger ; and you are to be particular kind to her, and she’ll try and run down to-morrow night, between lights. The fare is paid, miss—the young woman paid it. She said she knew you hadn’t changed your cheque.”

Mary’s mother did not look as good-natured as Mary herself. But Emily was so bowed down by circumstances as hardly to observe the difference.

“ Well,” observed the woman to her youngest daughter—“ well, I never saw any one so careless about accommodation. Why, she said, the back would do as well as the front room, though

I told her she might have either at the same rent; and if I had not undressed her, she'd have either sat up all night, or lain down in her clothes. She's more like a dead than a living woman."

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## CHAPTER V.

THE next morning the pat, pat, pat, of Mr. Byfield's cane was heard ascending the steps leading to Mr. Hylier's hall door; his knock had the determined sound of "I will come in." "Remember, James," said his mistress, "popping" her head out of the breakfast-room, "I am not at home—I shall not be home all day—I am out for a week—went down to meet your master last night." James bowed, and the lady disappeared.

"My mistress is not at home, sir," observed the sapient footman. Mr. Byfield poked him aside with his cane, and having entered the hall, said, "I want to speak to Miss Dawson."

"Miss Dawson, sir, left the house last night."

"Left last night! Then where is she gone to?"

"I really can't say, sir; she's left for good, trunk and all."

"Left—gone; but surely you must know where she drove to?"

"The housemaid saw her off, sir." Mr. Byfield commanded Mary to appear; but she having always lived "in the best families," lied with superior firmness. "The very words Miss Dawson said, sir, were, 'Tell the cab to drive to Oxford Street, and then I will direct him the number;' these were her last words, sir, and I can tell no more." Mary was in haste—not agitated by the untruth—so she stayed no farther question, but dived down the kitchen stairs.

"Now," said the old gentleman, "I *must* see your mistress."

"Not at home sir," repeated James.

"When will she be at home?"

"Not for a week. She's gone down to where master's stopping."

"That's the third falsehood you have told since I entered this house, young man," observed Mr. Byfield. "Your mistress cannot have gone down to where your master is, because business obliged your master to come to my house this morning, even before he visited his own;" and Mr. Byfield turned and entered the breakfast-room so suddenly as almost to knock down the fair mistress of the mansion, who certainly was as close to the door as if she had been about to open it for her unwelcome intruder.

"Good morning, madam!" he said, with the exceeding courtesy of an angry man, before the

storm that has gathered, breaks. “Good morning. Will you have the kindness to tell me *where* Miss Dawson is gone, and *why* she is gone?”

Mrs. Hylier suffered Mr. Byfield to repeat his question before she answered; she was debating within herself whether she should assume the tone of indignant and outraged propriety, or that of a gentle upbraiding; her temper triumphed, and she lost sight of her husband’s interests and her husband’s wishes. In loud and unqualified terms she upbraided Mr. Byfield with what she termed his sinful duplicity, in forcing a person, whom she called by no gentle name, into her house; exhausted a dictionary of epithets upon Miss Dawson—talked wildly and at random of depravity—and wound all up by a movement something between an hysterick and a faint. Mr. Byfield sat—his great gray eyes dilating and contracting, like those of a cat in the sunshine, according as his passions were moved; and notwithstanding his age, such was their fire, that they would have scorched the noisy fragile thing—who had sunk into her luxurious chair, a trembling heap of mull-muslin and English blonde—if she had had the moral courage once to look him fairly and bravely in the face. There sat Mr. Byfield, white and motionless—so white, that the flakes of his snowy hair could hardly be distinguished from his cheeks; his eyes flashing, as I have said; his long bony fingers grasping either knee, and grasping it so

tightly, that the dark veins stood out like purple ridges on his hands.

“Ring the bell!” she said, at last perceiving that he took no more notice of her sobs than he had done of her words. “Ring the bell!” He neither spoke nor moved; and at last the lady essayed to do it herself. He seized her arm—and Lord Lyndsay’s mailed glove did not press more deeply into the soft arm of Mary of Scotland, than the old man’s animated bones did into the wrists of Mrs. Hylier. She screamed with spleen and pain, but resumed her seat, and there he continued to sit opposite to her, without trusting himself to speak, yet, by his presence, effectually preventing her moving. Suddenly Mr. Hylier’s well-known knock resounded through the house. There was a rush of light young feet—the echoes of the beatings of anxious hearts—and exclamation of “Oh, papa!”—“Dear papa!”—and a whisper or two, and then Mr. Hylier came in, just in time to catch his wife, in another faint, upon his arm. Questions followed; and the two young ladies were turned out of the room; while Mrs. Hylier sobbed and moaned, and called herself an ill-used woman. And at last the old man, gathering up his energies, girded himself and spoke. He stated fairly and plainly, in agitated tones, that he had placed Miss Dawson with Mrs. Hylier, because he wished to observe how she would bear the ill and careless manner in which he knew she would be treated. It was (he said)

of paramount importance to him that he should observe how she bore up against the disagreeableness of her situation ; it had not (he continued) escaped him, that, as long as the impression remained upon Mrs. Hylier's mind, that it would *please him* to be kind to his protégée, she was tolerably considerate ; but when she found that he neglected her altogether—the circumstance that would have drawn a noble mind to be more gracious to one so utterly deserted by the world—rendered Mrs. Hylier careless and unfeeling. Mr. Byfield had his own way of doing every thing ; and there is little doubt, from his own statement, that he would have gone on, heaping mystery on mystery, had he not been suddenly aroused to a sense of Miss Dawson's uncomplaining illness, by her appearance in the park ; and, after much mental deliberation, he determined—still after his own strange fashion —to provide her a quiet home, and be himself the bearer of his reasons to Mrs. Hylier.

“ I thought,” he said, “ that fertile as you and your friend Mrs. Ryal are in attributing impurity to pure motives, you would hardly have *dared* to pin a slander upon these white hairs, or supposed that so single-minded and self-sacrificing a creature as Miss Dawson would rush into vice—and such vice ! I imagined, indeed, that you would have considered me her father ; but to have thought and acted as you have done—to have turned her pennyless”—

“ I did not ! ” screamed Mrs. Hylier ; “ I gave

her a month's salary—I—I”—and then she appealed to Mr. Hylier, to know *why he* suffered her to be insulted; and, losing all command of herself, reiterated her opinion of Mr. Byfield's conduct.

“For shame,” said her husband. “Mr. Byfield, I intreat you to consider how Mrs. Hylier has been acted upon by the misrepresentation of Mrs. Ryal. She does not think her own thoughts, or speak her own words.”

“I do!” repeated the foolish woman. “If it is not as I say—what connexion is he of Miss Dawson's?”

“**HER GRANDFATHER!**” answered the old man. “And had I not believed that I could place no dependence upon a character that had not been steeped to the lips in the bitter waters of the world's strife, I ought to be ashamed to own it. Why, then, should I feel such bitterness towards you—poor *thing* of a whirling world! You!—upon whom she had no claim; but *that* is false. Madam, there are women in the world who acknowledge the claim of sisterhood, even when it is covered by the rags of shame; who seek to save—whose hands are filled to overflowing by the charity which God pours into their hearts; whose means, however small, like the widow's cruise, increase by giving; whose names will ascend and form part of the glory of the everlasting heavens, when ours will leave no record save upon the cold and lying tombstone! Oh,

my God! my God! why do you not soften our hearts before it is too late!"

Mrs. Hylier would have essayed, if she dared, to say that she did not believe he was Emily's grandfather, but she could not; and Mr. Hylier, while the old man paced the room violently, and wrung his hands, whispered her he had but that morning returned from the neighbourhood where her mother died, and where her extraordinary and unceasing efforts for the support of that dear mother, particularly during the last years of her life, were talked of amongst a domestic and parent-loving people, as something so enduring, so patient, so gentle, so holy, as to be quite wonderful. "And this is the creature," he added, "that the gossip of a chattering neighbourhood, eager to pick up the crumbs of court or any news, prompted you to insult. I felt honoured by my friend's desire that I should investigate for myself, and all I can say is, that if I had had the slightest knowledge of her high qualities, she should never have been treated as she has been."

"A lesson!—a lesson!" said the old man, in a voice hoarse with an emotion he used every exertion to control—"A lesson to us all, Hylier. But now to find my—yes, my child—the child of my daughter, to tell her who I am." He again paced the room, pressing his hands together, and almost convulsed.

"May I hope, sir"—stammered Mrs. Hylier.

“Hope nothing, madam,” he interrupted, “as I do, but that time may be given *you*, as well as *me*, to render justice.”

And now, if the tale were to end, as made-up stories do, with a record that the old man found his grandchild much better than he had anticipated; that they lived for a short time happily together, and then the governess was married to a great lord, to the discomfiture of all gossips, I should substitute fiction for fact—which I cannot do. The life of a young woman, devoted to the instruction of youth, may be likened to those streams we read of—springing up we know not where—which murmur along, fertilising as they flow; and then, after trees, and flowers, and sightly plants, have sprung up through their unhonoured influence—behold! they have disappeared into the bowels of the earth, and are seen no more! In society, we constantly meet young and accomplished ladies; their acquirements are universally acknowledged and admired; until they “came out,” they were attended to always in their hours of study, of illness, of amusement by their “governess.” She is gone now; no one ever inquires after her. She is gone, if young enough, to another situation, again to attend upon young ladies in their hours of study, amusement, and illness—again to be dismissed—again forgotten. I think it is a high privilege to be intrusted with the education of youth—one of the very highest that a woman can enjoy; but if she perform her duty, her services should

*never be slighted or forgotten.* The “teacher” should rank, after her own immediate family, in the pupil’s affections; or, if that cannot be (for we can all respect many whom we do not love,) in her esteem; she should always be honoured, and never permitted to want; her importance to society is as vital as the unseen sap to the blooming tree; her situation subordinate, her influence paramount—not in the usual course of influences; but if we look back to our own young days, we shall remember how much of what we learnt from some patient teacher has directed us through life. My astonishment has often been excited, not by the little which governesses know, but by their knowing so much. Nevertheless, until some decided step is taken by the legislature to regulate not only schools, but the education of teachers, there must always be a chance of their incompetency to perform at least a portion of all that is required of them. Still, in nine cases out of ten, what has been done for ourselves in the way of education, has been done by this hardly-used race. And certainly Mr. Byfield ought to have been satisfied with what Emily Dawson had already accomplished, without turning her over to one whom he knew would try her to the uttermost. His feelings were hardened, and he was rendered suspicious—by the past circumstances of a varied life—of there being any good in human nature; his benevolence was often frozen over; but when

it thawed, the verdure of a generous nature came quickly forth.

The first step he found it necessary to take was to find out where Miss Dawson was; but here he was baffled. The housemaid had received warning from her mistress the previous night, in consequence, she said, of her attention to "the governesses;" and a few moments after Mr. Byfield had spoken to her, had gone, as Mrs. Hylier had commanded she should. The other servants pretended to be, or were ignorant, of her residence; and such was her firmness of manner in the falsehood, that Mr. Byfield believed she had told him the truth. The natural impetuosity of his character was now directed to find her out; and fancying she had gone to her old friends, he posted off, leaving a wonderful story to the good people of Kensington, which was told in at least twenty different ways, the *last* being the most extraordinary.

While all was agitation and confusion in her former home—while Mrs. Hylier re-approached Mrs. Ryal, and Mrs. Ryal continued to assert that, despite all, she knew she was right—while Mrs. Gresham's soft heart yielded in all the weak lovingness of its nature to the conviction that Emily Dawson was a "wonder among governesses," and Miss Colette Mercier divided her feelings as equally as possible between "chere Emily," her new parasol, her chere maman, and a certain leaning towards a gentleman who always wore "such sweet kid gloves"—while the servants re-

gretted they had not been more civil, and the visitors that they had not been more polite—Emily Dawson, overpowered by the weight of an illness she had so long borne up against, was lying utterly incapable of sustaining thought or action in the small back room of a tiny house at Chelsea. Mary's arrival was a great consolation to her. She sat by her bedside “mending up her things,” and “quilling her caps,” as a preparatory step to her “looking for a new place.” Emily would have been glad had she talked less; but as she never expected an answer, and chatted in a low, sleepy, rippling tone of voice, it did not disturb her much. She spoke in what she considered would be the most consoling manner, shewing how much better off Emily was “than many a poor lady governess she knew long ago.” She told of one who, having lost her health, died in a workhouse, and no one ever looked after her; of another, who was the only comfort and support of a blind father, who would sit holding her hands in his, running his fingers over the arm worn to a shadow, listening for the doctor's tread, and turning his sightless eyes to his face, as if trying to read an opinion it gave the good doctor pain to pronounce. And then, how she did pray that God would take her father first; but the prayer was not heard, for she died, and every morning the father crawled to the churchyard. The little children would go out of their way to lead him to his daughter's grave; and at last he died upon it, without a complaint; and the coro-

ner returned a verdict—"Died by the visitation of God;" but she knew it was by the visitation of famine. "Another young person" passed them by every morning; there, that was her walk, she knew it by the halting, as she was lame, though for all that, she got over many a mile in a week.

She had a turn for languages, and taught a great many at a shilling a lesson, and had constant employment; and one sister instructed in music, and another in dancing. They worked very hard, and did not earn much, but they lived happy with one another, and liked it better than going out for good, though Miss Fanny (the dancer) was fearful she couldn't teach this last winter, from a wheezing she caught from damp feet, as she could not afford to ride. Indeed, Mary declared, in her time she had seen much misery under a thin silk gown; poor ladies were obliged to seem rich, for if they did not dress "respectable," no one would have them, though they hardly paid them enough to earn salt. Miss Dawson was happy, compared to many she knew. It was a pity that tradesmen did not keep their daughters to the shop instead of giving them notions above one thing and below another. Making them governesses half times, was little better than making them slaves. Miss Dawson ought to bless her stars; for as soon as her cold wore away, she'd be sure of a good situation.

And she would have talked thus much longer, had not her mother called her out to inquire, if

she knew “what property the ‘poor lady’ had,” as a doctor ought to see her ; and Mary, good-natured girl, spurned at the question, yet coincided in the opinion, saying she was no expense to them, for she had neither ate nor drank ; and if she had, she had wherewith to pay—it may be remembered that Mary did not particularly adhere to truth—and that the doctor had better come at once ; she would go and fetch him—and so she did ; and when he heard her cough, and saw the flush upon her cheek, and her hair moist with the dews of that English disease to which thousands are sacrificed, he blistered her chest to relieve her breathing, ordered a light diet, and particularly recommended Italy, the south of France, or Madeira ; and that to a governess, with three pounds five and sixpence in her purse, and no friend !

“ Oh, I shall be soon better, sir,” she said—“ very soon. I have been much worse ; a few days’ rest and quiet will quite set me up.”

“ Send to her friends,” said the doctor to Mary.

“ Lord, sir !” replied Mary, opening her eyes, “ *sure she’s only a governess !* ”

## CHAPTER VI.

LET any one recall the sick-bed of a beloved object suffering from hectic fever; how wearing that everlasting cough, which only ceases to begin again; how sad, after you have drawn the curtain, softened the night-lamp, and given the composing draught, with an earnest prayer to Almighty God that the patient may enjoy sleep, how sad still to hear the hack, hack, of that gasping chest breaking up the false repose, and then to know, by the movement and the sigh, that the poor patient has turned; and though the pillows are down, and the sheets cambric, and though thoughts and hands of tenderest love have smoothed them, and poured out the most soothing and reviving perfumes—that still, though there is little positive pain, there is no rest—and you are called;—that sweet silver voice steals its melodious way from your ear to your heart; the church clock has struck two, and the watchers' eyes are heavy, but the eyes of the watched are bright; and she will have you open the curtain, and she talks of things to come in this world—of the spring time and the summer, and of when she shall be better, and of how pleasantly the autumn will pass at the seaside; the summer will fly quite away with her cough, and then she shall so enjoy the autumn! And while she talks, her thin pure face and

glorious brow, round which the damp hair clings, rest on your bosom, and you know that it is now December; but that autumn, summer, spring, will never be gladdened by that hopeful voice! Nothing can bring her back the ease of body which the poor cat enjoys before the fire; tended, as she is by the watchful love of a whole house, she knows not rest. How much more must the governess have suffered in that small room, upon a hard bed, shaken by kindly but rough hands, believing that if God prolonged the life which, despite our sufferings, we all cling to, it would be ended—where? Alas! *no hospital will open its doors to consumption*; the lagging, certain, wearing, wasting, complaint, engendered by our shivering atmosphere, of which so many hundreds, *especially governesses*, perish, finds no public friend in charitable England.\* But it was not only the wretched, unrelieved, weariness and pain of body that Emily suffered from; it was, that she had been hooted forth characterless; she, the pure, high-minded, upright, honourable girl, trembled lest she was sinking into her grave tainted; that she would meet her mother with the mark of shame, which passeth not away, upon her brow. The notion haunted her; the thought of it would not

\* I am happy to say that this will not be much longer a reproach to England; a few kind-hearted estimable persons in this neighbourhood (Old Brompton) have already advanced considerably with a plan and subscription to open an asylum for the relief—if cure be impossible—of consumptive patients.

let her sleep by night or by day ; she said in the morning she would be better by the evening, and in the evening she would certainly be better in the morning ; for she was of a hopeful spirit ; and her disease—slow, pallid, traitor that it is—encouraged hope. Several days elapsed, and her little money, despite Mary's exertions, was nearly gone. With the high-toned generosity of a noble mind, she would not write to her friend of her distress, for she knew she had not the means to relieve her, and why should she make her unhappy. She did write, though a little every day, resolving to send the letter off *when she was better*. The doctor saw she grew rapidly worse, more rapidly than usual, for her mind was goading the disease to double speed ; her money was gone, though Mary stoutly said it was not, and showed her silver, which the girl had pledged her own Sunday-shawl to obtain.

In the mean time, Mr. Byfield was driven almost to madness. What would he not have given to have had the power of recalling his former harshness ?—how he deprecated the bitterness which made him change even his name, that his child might never hear of him ! how cruel did he deem what a little time before he would have called his consistency ! how did he mingle tears with his morning and evening prayers, and in positive agony call upon his wife to forgive him his unForgiveness toward his child ! He found no trace of his granddaughter in her native place, and in London he was bewildered

by the difficulties and negatives he experienced every where.

Mary had only been a few weeks in her place, and had covered her retreat with what she considered admirable skill. The abruptness and violence of Mr. Byfield's manner defeated his own inquiries ; but fortunately, Mrs. Gresham, who had taken from the first a warm interest in Emily, was more successful. She made inquiries with a woman's tact, and at last communicated the good news, that she had traced Miss Dawson to Mary's house. The old man intreated her to accompany him there, and she consented. Mary's mother had become very discontented at her lodger's poverty, and mother and daughter were in loud altercation on the subject, when Mr. Byfield, unable to restrain his impatience, thundered so loudly at the door, as to bring all the inhabitants of the street to their windows.

"I tell you, sir, I know nothing about her. How should I ?" exclaimed Mary to Mr. Byfield, who could only get his stick through the open door, for she held it close with a considerable share of strength. "It's no use your coming in ; she's not here ; and if she was, what is it to you, you old sinner?"

"I tell you," said Mr. Byfield, "she is my grandchild. God help me!" muttered the old man, as he leant against the door-post ; "God help me ! that rough girl guards her honour more carefully than I did."

“That’s impossible!” answered Mary. “If you was her grandfather, you’d never have sent her governessing to Mrs. Hylier, I know.”

“I am here, Mary,” said the gentle voice of Mrs. Gresham; “and it is quite true that Miss Dawson is Mr. Byfield’s granddaughter.”

Mary opened the door with what, in the poor, is deemed “impertinence,” in the rich, “self-possession,” as if nothing had occurred; curtsied them in, and hoped that Mr. Byfield would not think the worse of her; she was a poor girl; and though great folks might live without a character, she could not.

Mrs. Gresham told Miss Dawson the fact she had learned as delicately and carefully as it could be told; and accounted for the old man’s strangeness by expressing the desire he felt to see, himself, how she would bear the rubs of life. She thanked God earnestly for the disclosure. The old man knelt by her bedside, and called her “his child”—“his dear child”—“his only hope and comfort on this side the grave.” Alas! people who are liberal of the bitters of existence, should remember that poison even unto death, may steal into the cup.

In a few hours, Emily was removed upon luxurious cushions to the house of which she had become the most honoured mistress; even Mrs. Hylier sent her little girls to minister to her comforts; and Mary was of course with her. A sudden spirit of sisterly love and tenderness sprang up amongst those who had been account-

ed censorious and malevolent ; and the surrounding maids, wives, and widows, became animated by a most extraordinary longing for inquiring into the state of Miss Dawson's health. They ascertained what Mr. Byfield's name had been, and that he had changed it to avoid his daughter's recognition. This knowledge afforded them satisfaction ; they did not even venture to censure the unpardonable harshness from a father to a child, though some of the more independent spirits amongst them insinuated, that " it was at least very strange, and carrying resentment farther than *they* could have done." Mrs. Ryal was the only one who remained firm to her first " principles " and opinions.

Every thing that skill could suggest, or luxury invent, was resorted to for the relief and comfort of the long-neglected girl. The great physician of the day told her grandfather, who stood before him with clasped and trembling hands, watchful eyes and ears, drinking in his words, that when she was able to be removed, he would recommend the south of Italy. This was in her dressing-room—a room hung with pale pink silk, where the softest breeze whispered its way amid crowded exotics, and the very light of heaven stole through tinted glass ; where the old man himself removed his shoes before he entered, lest the smallest noise might disturb the creature cushioned upon satin, who, only a few weeks before, was expected to brave cold winds and everlasting fatigue. The reaction upon the grandfather's

mind amounted almost to insanity. The stern, bitter satirist, had melted into a fond old man, who seemed absorbed in having once more something upon which he could safely pour out his long pent-up affections. It was not that a new nature had sprung up in him ; it was only the nature of his youth returned. The truth was, *it was himself with whom he had been ill at ease, and not the world.* This is more frequently the case than we are inclined to believe.

The physician again felt her pulse, spoke a few kindly words, and departed. So softly did Mr. Byfield follow him down stairs, that he did not even hear his foot-fall ; but he arrested his attention when in the hall, by pressing his arm. "Sir, sir," he said in a trembling tone : "in here—speak softly—she does not love noise. You said, when she was able, we were to go to the south of Italy. Now, how soon will that be ? We have had some sharp north winds—those keep her back ; but it will be when the wind changes ? "

" Not so soon as that, my good sir ; but I hope soon—*indeed I hope it*—she has interested me much. You must keep her quiet—perfect repose—she must speak but as little as possible ; she must not exert herself in the least ; her lungs have been over-worked."

" God forgive me ; they have, they have ! "

" Very natural, my dear sir, you should have liked her to read and talk to you ; but you must

give that up," continued the physician, not knowing her past history.

"Ay, sir, ay—but Italy; when will she be able to be removed—in a week—a fortnight, perhaps—three weeks?"

"Indeed, I hope so. We can, you know, only do our best, and hope."

"Yes, sir; we can pray—and I do. You think it may be a month?"

"I cannot possibly tell to a particular time. We must watch the symptoms, and act accordingly."

"Certainly, sir; but you say the climate is not fit for her?"

"It is not; but she cannot bear exertion yet. Good morning, my dear sir; I will try and be here to-morrow precisely at the same hour."

"You do not trifle with me, sir, do you?—raising hope to destroy it?" inquired the old man, almost fiercely.

"I have raised no hope," returned the doctor. "If she bears removal, it must be to the south of Italy."

Mr. Byfield caught at the back of a chair, and gasped for breath; at last he repeated, "If—if; you said *if*. Is there any doubt, then?"

The agony and despair lined in the old man's face compelled the doctor to lay down his hat; and the next moment found him seated by Mr. Byfield's side.

"My dear, good sir, I never deceive; but I hope you will nerve yourself as becomes a Chris-

tian. All things are possible ; and every thing shall be, indeed of late *has been*, done, to overthrow our insidious foe. "If I had seen her sooner"—the old man started as if an asp had stung ; him "though indeed that might not have availed much," continued the ready doctor ; "she is young—the summer before her—let us hope for the best, and do our best ; but I tell you frankly, the symptoms are against us."

"But she said she was so much better this morning?"

"It is a cause of exceeding thankfulness to find her so cheerful."

"And a good sign, sir?"

"The sign of a good mind," replied the medico, evasively.

Mr. Byfield was gratified by the idea. "And so she has—an angel's mind," he answered. "Perhaps you can tell me to-morrow about Italy, sir. I have worked hard all my life, and have been a thriving man—more rich than people think, sir. I will heap gold upon that table, so that you can hardly move it, if you but save her life."

"What an extraordinary development of character!" thought the physician, as his carriage rolled away ; "why, a tithe of this care would have saved her—ay, six months ago!"

"And where have you been, dear grandpapa," said Emily, as he stole again into her room, to sit and look at her, as he had done during the past

weeks, until they had grown into months.  
“Where have you been?”

“Hush! you must not talk!” he said.

“Oh, but I may, a little under my breath. I used to be obliged to talk, but now it is a pleasure. Do let me mention what we spoke of yesterday—the nice alms-houses you said you would build for old governesses. Oh, how glad I shall be to see the first stone laid! When shall it be? Next August, on my birth-day? Or, come here, I will speak very softly, if you will not be angry. My poor mother! She used to be so proud of her governess-child! Would you lay the first stone on *her* birth-day—the first of September? Thank you, dear grandpapa! Bless you! I see you will! I shall not want to go to Italy; that will cure me!”

It was beautiful to observe, that, though this creature loved life, as a young bird loves to poise upon its feeble wings, she did not fear death. As her frame decayed—as she wasted into a shadowy outline of what all those who had known her *now* declared had been so beautiful, her mind, freed from the grosser particles of earth, became more buoyant—purer it could hardly be—though more ethereal, when her cough permitted short snatches of sleep. She seemed as if, through those thin eyelids, she gazed upon all the mysteries of the unclouded world; a perpetual smile parted the pallid lip, like the division of a lily-bud; and when she awoke, it was to confer fresh

interest on the things of life—an angel bringing the odour of paradise on its wings.

Poor Miss Mercier would kneel for hours by her side, and smile and weep by turns. "It did her good," she said ; and she said rightly. Such scenes do good ; they strike upon the heart ; there is no deception in them.

"Do not weep for me," said Emily ; "I shall be better soon. Every day I become better ; and if I could only make you feel the importance of your duties, I should be so much happier. I am changed, though, a good deal. Were I to teach again, I would try and interest my pupils more about Hereafter than I did before. I would talk to them much more about the heavens, those lightsome heavens, where the just are made perfect ; it is so happy to think of their radiance, their glory, their everlastingness ; and to think of this beautiful world, in which I once sorrowed and laboured, and yet loved ; for surely it was created by God as a place of transit, where the good may have a foretaste of that happiness prepared for them hereafter!"

She would talk thus to all, pouring forth the very sweetness of wisdom, so that people wondered how she had gained such knowledge. Her two former pupils could hardly be separated from her ; and though her grandfather manifested much impatience at being disturbed from her side by any one, still he was so proud, even during those awful hours, of her goodness and sweet mind, that he could not refuse them admission,

but made up for disappointments by stealing into the room during the night, and watching or praying while the heavy-eyed nurse slept. Each day the physician came, and each day the old gentleman would follow him outside the door, and inquire, as though the question were still new—“When will the time come? When may we go to Italy?” And the doctor would reply, with a kind look, “Not yet.”

Even to Mr. Byfield, to every one but herself, it was evident she was dying; it is almost too hard a word to apply to such a passing away; it was as if a rose dropped leaf by leaf, until the last few that remained trembled on the stem. She said, every day, she was better, much better; she had no pain now; and she should soon be able to drive out in the warm sunshine. Her friend, the clergyman’s sister, came to her from the country. And the clergyman himself, he who had attended her mother’s death-bed, prayed beside hers. It might have been that the young man loved her; but she never dreamt he did—never. She talked a great deal of the past and future, and of what blessings would arise from a higher-toned education. And one morning in particular, when the doctor called, he reproved her for wasting her strength in words. Again Mr. Byfield followed him outside the room, and the physician led him into another apartment, and closed the door.

“My dear sir,” he said, “our dear patient is very weak to-day.”

“She said she was better,” replied Mr. Byfield.

“She is not; her mind is purer, and higher, and holier than ever; but she is sinking.”

“Not unto death?” muttered the old man.

The physician turned away; he could not bear to look upon his earnest features.

“God bless you, sir; you have a great consolation; every thing has been done that could be done; I wish I was as sure of heaven; good morning—be composed.”

The old man turned away—he was alone—he sank into a chair; burst after burst of tears convulsed his frame. It was nearly four hours before he could enter her room again; he saw she was greatly changed in that short space of time, and yet she hailed him with her feeble voice, declaring she was better; he motioned Miss Mercier, who had been with her, to leave the chamber. He took her hand in his, gazed earnestly into her face, and sank upon his knees.

“It is not time for prayer yet, is it?—it is not night yet?” she said; “but pray, dear grandfather, I was wrong—it is always time for prayer.”

“I am going,” he answered, “to pray to you. Listen! Here, on my knees, I do intreat your pardon; an old man, whose harshness deprived you of your mother—whose harshness has abridged the length of your sweet life. I did not intend to try you beyond your strength, but I ought to have known better. I chained you

with those hands to the galley, when I should have given you freedom. Can you forgive me, Emily? And when you meet your mother, will you ask her not to turn from me in heaven as I turned from her on earth. I will never rise till you forgive and bless me!"

The poor girl was deeply affected; she threw herself feebly forward and clasped her arms round his neck, and pressed her cheek to his. She poured forgiveness and blessings on his white head, and fondly pushed back the silver hair from his brow. He replaced her on her pillow; but the exertion had shaken the sand in the glass of life; it was passing rapidly.

"You will be kind to those I love," she said, "and truly forgive those who were harsh to me; and you will be very good to poor Mary; and—oh, heavenly Father, receive my spirit!"

These were her last words. The old man, frantic with grief, dispatched the nurse, who had just entered the room, for help; and when she returned, the dead face of his grandchild was resting on his breast, and he held up his finger, and said, "Hush! hush!" as though she slept, which he believed she did; and all night long he remained in the same position, murmuring every now and then as if soothing a slumbering infant.

The old man is still living, but they say his mind is gone. Certainly his affections are in the grave, which he persists in saying was dug by his own hands.

## D U M M Y.

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“I WAS BORN SO, MOTHER.”

“I ASSURE you it was all Dummy’s fault, grandmamma; you know that when she gets a notion into her head it is quite impossible to prevent her from persisting in doing whatever she determines to do !”

“She is a little obstinate, now and then, I confess,” replied Lady Isabella Lloyd to her granddaughter Margaret, who censured so severely one who had been sorely afflicted.—“A little obstinate, now and then,” repeated the noble old lady—“but that ought not to provoke injustice: you forget, Margaret, who sate by your bed of long continued illness—you forget who watches your every movement—you forget who humbles to your every caprice—you forget”—

“No, grandmamma,” interrupted the young lady, “I do *not* forget—I love dear Dummy very much, but she vexes me sometimes.”

“You vex both her and me very often,” re-

plied her mother—"and you should remember that her infirmity frequently causes her to be impetuous, while you, my child, have, thank God, no such excuse!"

"*Dummy*," as the subject of this conversation had been always called, was a young and exceedingly beautiful Indian girl, who had been committed to the care of Lady Isabella and Mr. Lloyd, no one exactly knew why, when not more than five years old; nobody knew who she was; —the servants called her "*Miss Dummy*,"—Lady Isabella "*little Dummy*,"—and Margaret (when she was in a good humour) "*dear Dummy*."—The captain of the vessel who brought her over, designated her as *Dummy* in a sort of bill-of-lading letter which he wrote to Mr. Lloyd, intimating her arrival and consignment to his care; and when the poor child appeared at Lloyd Park, *why* she was so described was but too apparent. She had not been born deaf; but so very imperfect were her organs of speech, that she could not pronounce the simplest sentence without such painful hesitation, that it was perfect agony both to herself and others—and it is not to be wondered at that she learned with avidity the signs which interpreted her thoughts, and saved her so much labour and excitement.

Lady Isabella treated her with great kindness, and the little stranger returned her love with a sevenfold interest. She was one of those creatures made up of tenderness and affection, with whom the world has little sympathy, be-

cause it cannot understand the earnestness, the uncalculating fondness, the devotion, the simplicity of its emotions. She was of singular and peculiar beauty : her limbs appeared as if bound together more by will than the power of muscle ; they were so small, so agile, so graceful, so full of motion, and so beautiful when in repose. To her the world appeared as one huge mass of poetry : she wept with the showers and danced with the sunshine ; she loved flowers, and moonlight and music ; and every bird and beast that was young and helpless was, as it were, cherished in her bosom, or carried in her arms. It was singular to observe how completely the luxuries and enjoyments of society failed to excite her interest ; this was the principal reason why she was so little seen by persons of rank and fashion who visited at Lloyd Park, or joined the fetes during the family's sojourn at their old-fashioned mansion in Grosvenor Place. Added to this distaste for society, or perhaps the real cause of its existence, was the knowledge she had of her defect ; not to be able to reply when spoken to must have caused a mind like hers a painful and constantly recurring misery ; and though she wrote apt and *piquant* answers to all who questioned, and wrote them in an exquisite hand upon her little tablets of the whitest ivory, still she would retire from society to her books, her music, or her flowers, leaving her lofty and magnificent friend Margaret in quiet possession of

the homage she appreciated far more highly than it deserved.

Sometimes Lady Isabella would force her into society, and display her beautiful charge calling sweet music from the harp, upon which she excelled,—yet in a way different from all others. Her execution was not startling, but the tones were deep and low, swelling and melodious, shadowing forth the gentler passions, and playing with the feelings, until she tuned them to her own sweet will. She felt all she expressed, and expressed it all the better for the feeling ; and her smiles would quiver, or her dark lustrous eyes overflow with tears, as she revelled in melody, the cadences of which sunk into the heart.

Lady Isabella Lloyd had the misfortune to lose her only son the same year that Dummy was consigned to her care : the calamity was increased by the fact that the only child he left had lost her mother, who unfortunately died the day on which she was born.

Margaret and her young companion grew in stature and in affection together ; I say affection, because, notwithstanding Margaret's hasty and imperious temper, and her proneness to cast blame upon her friend, she loved her, not perhaps with a very strong affection, for *that* would have overcome all jealousy, and those little painful fits of occasional ill-temper which she indulged in ; but she really liked the Indian girl very much when she did not fancy that her

grandmamma loved her too well. The observation which drew forth Lady Isabella's reproof was one she was rather too often in the habit of making: if the pitch of the piano did not exactly suit her voice, it was Dummy's fault; if she misplaced her drawings, Dummy was blamed: if her harp-playing was not admired as much as she thought it deserved to be, Dummy was secretly condemned. "It is her playing," imagined Margaret, "that throws mine into the shade."

My young friends, have you ever thought of the meanness and despicable nature of envy? Have you considered its dangerous tendency? have you called to mind how it lowers and degrades every generous principle of your nature? have you observed how it debases the mind, and cramps the understanding? have you not read how Cain envied Abel? *Envy was the first murderer.* I would say to you earnestly, most earnestly, suffer it not to enter your hearts, for, if once it enters, it will dwell therein; it is the most creeping and insidious of all sins; its progress is almost imperceptible, but it is sure; and its effects on yourself and towards others are terrible to think upon.

If any one had told Margaret that she envied her afflicted companion, she would have tossed her haughty head, and demanded *why?* Yet she *did* envy her. She envied her the share she possessed of her grandmamma's affections; she envied her the admiration excited by her beauty,

and her skill in music. She forgot how great were her privations, and she suffered her mind to become tainted by this despicable vice. You must not suppose that Dummy was faultless ; she was irritable ; she was apt to imagine that she was the object of slight and remark, when she was neither ; and, though she had latterly conquered herself to a great degree, and did not exhibit the impatience she used in her childhood, yet her cheek would flush, her eyes overflow with tears, and she would seek the privacy of her own room, and weep away her irritation. During her early days it had never entered into her mind to inquire how she was supported ; whether she possessed any property of her own, or was entirely dependent upon the bounty of Mr. and Lady Isabella Lloyd. When, however, she had attained her sixteenth year, she became very anxious about it, and ventured to question Lady Isabella upon the subject ; it was with a trembling hand that she presented her the tablet upon which the inquiry was written, with a request to tell her who she was.

“Are you not happy ?” said the old lady.

Dummy threw her arms around her friend’s neck as an assurance that she loved her, rather than as a reply to her question. “You will never want the means of living as you now live,” continued Lady Isabella ; “will not that content you ?” Dummy hung her head. “I do not like to refuse you any reasonable request ; and yet, perhaps it is better that you know nothing

more about yourself?" The girl closed her hands in supplication. Lady Isabella paused:—"You have a claim upon us; in point of feeling, almost as strong as Margaret's;—listen;—Mr. Lloyd has been twice married; I am his second wife. His first marriage produced him a daughter, who became, as she grew up, anything but a blessing to him. Without his permission she went to India, where she died, leaving you upon the world."—"And my father?" wrote the Indian on her tablets. "We suppose him dead; at all events he deserted you. My husband felt his daughter's disobedience and evil conduct so bitterly, that I could only prevail upon him to receive you on one condition, that your relationship was never to be mentioned."

"I could not help my poor mother's error,"—she pencilled—"I am not disobedient."

"My dear child," said Lady Isabella, "perhaps I have not done right in telling you so much; you can form no idea of the cause of Mr. Lloyd's displeasure; it was great, it was terrible! Your mother almost broke his heart. Margaret has no idea of this; she does not know that her grandfather had ever more than one child, and it is better that she continue to think so."

Dummy seized her tablets eagerly, and wrote, "She would love me better if she thought I was her cousin."

"No," said Lady Isabella, "she would not; and I *command* you not to inform her of it."

Lady Isabella had seen the envious disposition of her otherwise beloved Margaret, and bitterly did she lament it. Dummy felt most sensibly this excellent lady's kindness ; and, while she wept upon her bosom, her voiceless prayers were offered that God might reward her generosity to the poor girl, who, but for her intercession, would have been indeed an outcast.

Then she again wrote, "I have nothing of my own!"

"You have enough," was Lady Isabella's reply, "and you will always have enough."

"But I owe all to charity!" was her next remark, and she blushed while she wrote it.

"My dear," said Lady Isabella gravely, "we owe all to charity—to the charity of God!"

Dummy was not satisfied. She longed to tell Margaret of her relationship—she longed to think of Mr. Lloyd, (though he was a harsh, stern man)—she longed to *write* him "Grandpapa." She often wept for her mother, and wondered if, when the end of all things came, she should be able to recognise her in another world. Her father too, she wondered if he were yet alive, and inquired of herself if *he* would look stern and cold like Mr. Lloyd. Margaret, whom she tenderly loved, repulsed her in a thousand different ways ; her behaviour to her was dictated by caprice. At one moment she would play with or sing to her ; the next she would refuse to walk or sit in the same room ; the truth was that Margaret at times struggled against her

envious feelings ; at others yielded most culpably to their suggestions. Lady Isabella had grown old, and Margaret might almost be called the mistress of the establishment. It is a great disadvantage to young persons to be intrusted with power before they know how to use it.

I need hardly repeat what has been so often and so wisely said, that, to command properly, we must first learn to obey. No mind is ever healthy that is not properly disciplined ; and Margaret had been indulged to excess from her birth. As an heiress, she was certain of having plenty of flattery and admiration, and both had become necessary to her as the air she breathed. Was it not melancholy to think that she grudged her afflicted friend the affection bestowed on her by her grandmother, and that latterly she never saw her seated at the harp without feeling a sharp and bitter pain at the applause bestowed upon her exquisite music ? One evening Dummy had been playing to Lady Isabella ; Margaret, who seldom spent many minutes with her grandmother, came in. " Margaret," said the old lady, " send for this harp, before the company you expect arrive : she plays on it better than she does on yours."

" Dummy professes to love music so much for your sake and its own," she replied bitterly, " that perhaps she may prefer remaining with you."

" She *does* prefer remaining with me, when one, the child of my child, prefers society and

amusement to the care it would be natural to suppose she ought to bestow upon her grandmother. Yet—”

The object of this encomium did not permit her ladyship to finish the sentence ; she threw her arms round her neck, and murmured the only word she could pronounce without pain, “ No—no—no—no.”

“ My sweet child,” said the old lady, “ it is ever thus ; you are always the peace-maker, my sweet—sweet child !”

“ Sheer hypocrisy,” muttered Margaret.—Then indeed the colour mounted to the Indian’s cheek ; fire flashed from her bright black eyes, as they rested on Margaret. Lady Isabella laid her hand on her arm, and looked imploringly in her face. The same moment Margaret quitted the room.

Dummy wept sadly all that night. Her feelings had long been subject to bitter injury, but they had never before been so insulted. Not even the command of her protectress could induce her to make one in the festivities ; and Margaret’s animosity was increased by the numerous inquiries which were made after “ *La Belle Indienne* !”

How different were the feelings of those two girls on that memorable night,—memorable, inasmuch as it was the first on which they retired to their several chambers without exchanging a well-understood “ good night—good night !” How many sweet remembrances are linked with

those two simple words ; the dear “ good night,” seldom unaccompanied by a blessing when it comes from the lips of an affectionate father or a tender mother ;—the delicious “ good night ” murmured when brothers and sisters kiss each other’s cheeks, and linger, loath to part, even to enjoy the refreshment of sleep, which they perhaps think sad, because it is solitary ;—the kind “ good night ” of friends—of those we esteem—of those separated by distance, and whom perhaps we may never meet again !—It is a gentle courtesy that ought never to be forgotten—born of good feeling—trained by good breeding.

Dummy knew that Margaret must pass her chamber to go to her own, and she watched for her soft but rapid footfall with a beating heart. It came, it went ; it did not even linger ; and when she heard the closing door she threw herself on her bed in an agony of grief. When her grief subsided she knelt and prayed. She examined her own heart ; she found it more full of indignation than was seemly in a Christian girl. She prayed again, and, though her thoughts were voiceless, they found their way to the Almighty’s throne. At last she prayed truly and earnestly for Margaret, and then she slept.

Let it be remembered how differently those two girls had spent the evening ;—the Indian by Lady Isabella’s sick couch, or in the solitude of her own room ; Margaret in the gaiety and splendour which surround the rich and beautiful. Will it be believed that it did not cost the young

heiress a single pang to omit the “good night,” to which she had been accustomed for years? She had argued herself into the belief that she had been injured by Dummy. She could not bear the hideous aspect of envy, and sought to conceal its deformity under the garb of indignation. She repeated to herself that “Dummy had supplanted her in her grandmamma’s affections, that she tried to supplant her every where. She, a poor dependent on their bounty—she sneered at her affliction—she—but it is an ugly picture; I will not continue it, and only add, *that* night she either did not or could not pray; and her maid told the servants the next morning, “that indeed if Miss Lloyd continued in such a temper as she was last night, she hoped she might sleep till Doomsday.” She awoke feverish and unrefreshed, only in time to receive a summons to attend her grandmamma. The excellent Lady Isabella was dying. She had been taken ill during the night, and had used her last energies to persuade her husband (who had grown more stern and harsh than ever) to acknowledge poor Dummy as his granddaughter.

“It will in some degree repay her,” said the old lady, “for the mortifications she has endured; it may curb Margaret’s overbearing habits. It is an act of justice to one whose undeviating obedience and good conduct have, I hope, in some degree atoned in your eyes for her parent’s fault. Do not turn away your head my dear husband,” she continued; “if you will

not do so much for the dear girl's sake, surely you will for *mine*." The stern man yielded, and before death had forever sealed those mild blue eyes, which never opened but to beam a blessing upon all around her, Mr. Lloyd had pressed "Dummy" to his bosom, and called her his "Child."

Margaret was so mortified that she refused to acknowledge her cousin as a relative, and was cruel enough to omit no opportunity of hinting at her mother's misconduct. But this system could not last for ever; God would not permit it; the cloud only concealed the sunshine. Margaret married a gay, glittering, fashionable, careless man, and in a very few years she found herself the mother of two children, deserted by her husband, and without the means of supporting either herself or them. This was indeed a change! Dummy remained with Mr. Lloyd until his death, and a little before that event occurred she received an extraordinary addition to her fortune, by the death of her father, of whom she had never heard until apprised by his executors of her wealth, which he had accumulated in a distant part of India. I forgot to mention that she married before her cousin; and it was a pleasant thing to see the stern harsh features of the venerable old gentleman relax into a child-like smile when Dummy's little Isabella would climb his knee, or, in its lisping voice, ask its ever-silent mamma "Why she did not talk?" I have written "ever-silent;" perhaps I should

have written “ever eloquent,” for her good works, her benevolence, her charities, spoke trumpet-tongued unto the world. Margaret and her cousin had long ceased to be even acquainted, until the misfortunes of the former; then Dummy nobly forgave the past, and wrote to her as follows:—

“ We were friends in youth, dear Margaret; let us be so in age. My Isabella desires sisters; let me teach your little ones to be sisters to her. My husband is busied in state affairs, and I am lonely. Will you not come and live with me, so that I may be no longer solitary in this large house? You shall talk to me of your dear grandmother; and I—you know *I can listen*. Come, and be to me again a friend; the remembrance of our *very* early days will bring them back to us again. You will be, as indeed you ever were, my beloved Margaret—and I will be, what I was so long, and ever hope to be, your

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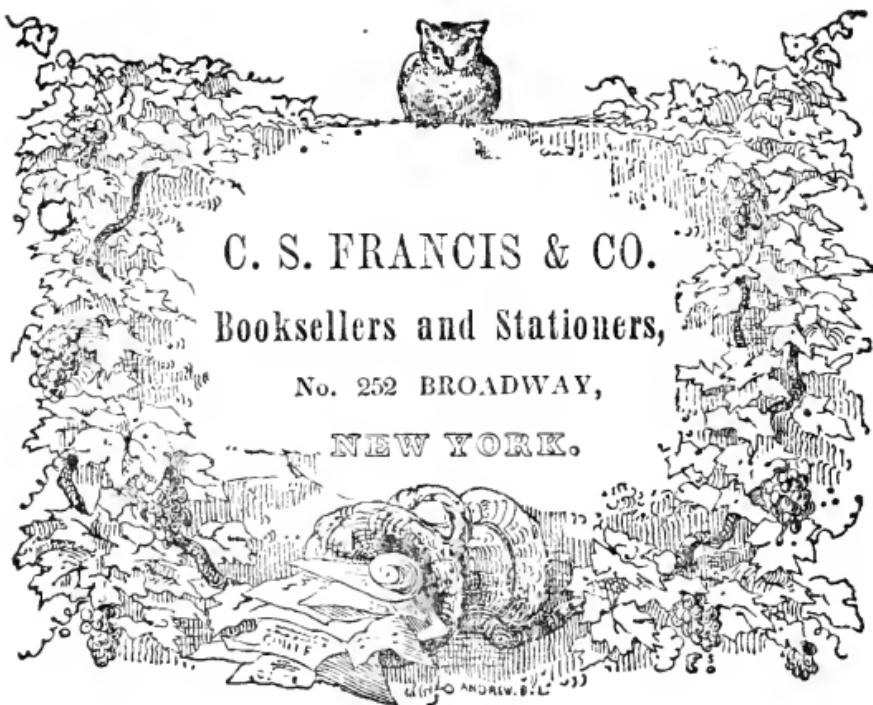
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